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**Partnership for Education in Malawi: Power and
Dynamics within the Education Sector Wide
Approach**

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**Partnership for Education in Malawi: Power and
Dynamics within the Education Sector Wide Approach**

Summary

This thesis investigates the sector wide approach (SWAp) partnership in the education sector in Malawi. In my study, I utilized interviews with key actors and a questionnaire for selected development partners (DPs), government officials and members of civil society. In so doing, my aim was to gain an insight into the origins of the SWAp as a critical partnership strategy for funding sectors in developing countries based on the conceptual understanding that it would prove to be a more effective aid modality than the project approach. Being a typical basis for partnership collaboration in the wake of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Malawian education SWAp, which was initiated as a response to the demands of changes in international aid during the 1990s, provided the focus of the study.

The findings of the study show evidence of how partnership interactions affected the SWAp process. This thesis demonstrates that the SWAp process has experienced challenges around power relations, as DPs seem to be either unwilling or unable to comply with the principles and partnership model prescribed in the Paris Declaration.

Funding constituted the main source of power relations in this SWAp process. DPs that donated more money to the government created an imbalance of power and influenced the interactions of other actors, which adversely influenced the decision-making process, including policy design and implementation. This in turn affected the participation of government officials, civil society and those DPs that donated less money. The thesis argues that as long as those who loan or donate the most fail to use their influence positively and facilitate adherence to the principles of the Paris Declaration, the SWAp process is bound to continue to be adversely affected. It also shows that although the SWAp differs fundamentally and conceptually from the project approach, in reality, nothing much has changed. The thesis further argues that the initial assertion that a SWAp is a more effective aid modality than the project approach is optimistic, and is made without due consideration for the practice on the ground.

In addition, the thesis demonstrates that the role of civil society as a watchdog in this SWAp was constrained and, although expected to constitute one of the main actors in the process, it was rarely viewed as part of the main partnership. It also found that even

though DPs seemed to embrace the innovations that a SWAp necessitated, their internal systems were too slow to change and adapt to the requirements of the modality. It argues that, moreover, DPs' own government mandates and internal systems restricted their operations in the SWAp process; which, in a sense, created conflict not only with their role as DPs, but also around the setting of national priorities.

Finally, a key finding of the study is that minimum capacity – a “capacity base” – is required if the government is to engage meaningfully in a SWAp, even though such a modality intrinsically includes state capacity building. Indeed, capacity was an area of great concern, particularly in terms of the ability of government officials to engage in the SWAp process according to the principles of ownership and leadership – as a certain amount of capacity is required to lead the SWAp process by bringing together DPs and civil society, and clearly advancing government priorities.

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List of Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
EU	European Union
FPE	Free Primary Education
FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GoM	Government of Malawi
GDC	German Development Corporation
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
ICEIDA	Iceland International Development Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JFA	Joint Financing Arrangement
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KFW	German Development Bank
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TA	Technical Assistance
TEVET	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All
WFP	World Food Programme

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis examines the nature and structure of collaboration between various development partners (DPs), government officials, and civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from the development of Malawi's education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) to the initiation of its National Education Sector Plan (NESP). Specifically, the aim of the study is to analyse critically the nature and dynamics of the Malawian education sector wide approach (SWAp) partnership and determine how this alliance influences the modality's process. This topic is particularly important, as the SWAp has become a critical partnership strategy in international development aid for funding sectors in developing countries (King 1999). In this context, a sector is determined as a division of a government's organizational structure such as education, agriculture and health. In Malawi, Health, Education, Water, Agriculture and Transport government sectors have adopted the SWAp as a means of enhancing development.

Malawi embraced the new modality from 2000, initiating policy reform that would facilitate a SWAp development process for achieving aid effectiveness (Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 2005). This has been implemented as a means of adjusting to the demands of development agencies that are supporting a shift from international aid in the context of a project-based approach to the SWAp for funding sectors in developing countries. Such a strategy was adopted in anticipation that a SWAp would prove to be a more effective modality for aid delivery than the project approach, which has largely failed to meet expectations (Foster, 2007).

My inspiration for this study stems from many years working for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – an agency with a vision to be the driving force that helps to ensure that children's rights are realized – with which I participated in various aid forums, including the Malawian education SWAp, with many development partners. During this time, I also observed with great concern that there were still a number of

factors that hindered access to high quality education, particularly in rural areas; and yet, there were 250 projects distributed across several sectors in Malawi (Foster, 2007) that had made no real impact on improving access, equity or quality in education. My decision to undertake this study was eventually confirmed by my participation in the Malawian education SWAp partnership during the development of the NESP – which experienced a number of relationship challenges – with the hope that my research findings would provide some solutions to the problems.

The thesis has ten chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the context of the public education system in Malawi with particular emphasis on sector reform. It highlights the many challenges in terms of funding, access, quality, equity, and internal efficiency that confront the education sector. It shows how with Malawi's high dependence on international development aid, the SWAp process was associated with increasing funding to the education sector, an intervention that would ultimately assist the government to achieve the international targets of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This led to high expectations among government officials who anticipated that a SWAp partnership would address these challenges.

Chapter 3 describes the historical circumstances that led to the shift from the project-based approach, characterized as totalitarian whereby donors had full control over funds and implementation, to the SWAp as a more egalitarian and democratic modality for funding developing countries. It acknowledges the necessity of the SWAp, but also highlights the challenges that many other countries have experienced due to deviation from the conceptual understanding of the approach mainly during implementation on the ground. The chapter also portrays a modality conceived in the rarefied atmosphere of the Paris Declaration purely from a theoretical perspective that has not always borne much resemblance to the reality on the ground. Finally, this literature review is used to frame my research question with regard to the SWAp partnership which is:

How do stakeholders' perspectives on partnership influence the education SWAp process in Malawi – from the Policy and Investment Framework to the National Education Sector Plan?

Chapter 4 provides details of the methodology used for the investigation. Owing to the nature of a study that focuses on understanding the structure of an education partnership, exploring the perspectives and opinions of its actors was a prerequisite to determining the effect that such an alliance had on the SWAp process. Consequently, the study utilizes a social constructivist philosophical framework to explore the views of DPs, government officials, and CSOs and NGOs as actors in the education SWAp process.

The thesis addresses the perceptions of actors on the emergence of the Malawian education SWAp partnership, relationships and roles of partners, power relations, and funding to the sector. A mixed methods approach is adopted based on the aims of the study.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 present the data from the study. Chapter 5 investigates the perspectives of various actors on the emergence of the education SWAp, beginning by providing their varying perceptions on the rationale for the emergence of the partnership. Chapter 6 examines the various actors' perspectives on their relationships and roles in the SWAp partnership. Chapter 8 investigates the various viewpoints on power relations in the partnership. Finally, Chapter 7 explores how the partnership influenced education funding.

Chapter 9 discusses the way power was conceptualized in this SWAp partnership, and examines the manner in which it was exercised in view of the challenges to the realization of a SWAp model, as defined by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).

Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the thesis and presents a summary of the main findings of the study, the contribution of the thesis, and the implications of the findings for SWAps in Malawi and beyond. It also enumerates areas for further research based on the findings of the study.

Chapter 2

Education Reform in Malawi

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the context of the reform of the Malawian public education system; and links changes in international development aid with internal reform of the sector. The chapter also highlights key events in the history of education in Malawi; the many challenges in terms of funding, access, quality, equity, and efficiency that confronted the education sector; and how the new modality was adopted in the anticipation that a SWAp would address these challenges.

2.1 Overview of Malawi and its Education System

Malawi is a former British colony, which was known as Nyasaland from 1907 until independence in 1964, when Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda became prime minister and changed the name. The country became a republic two years' later in 1966, with Dr Banda as the first President of the Republic of Malawi (Ng'ambi, 2010). He ruled the country for 30 years, maintaining tight control over administration of the land and its resources (Chimombo, 2009); thus, effectively, turning Malawi into an autocratic state (Rose, 2002).

As one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world, Malawi relies heavily on donor funds to finance its national budget. The poverty rate is estimated to be 65.3 percent of the total population; it has a GNP per capita of approximately US\$160; about 52 percent of the population lives below the poverty benchmark of US\$1 per day; and it has a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) prevalence of 12 percent amongst the 15–49 years age group – albeit a slight improvement from a peak of 14 percent (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2006; Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009). Furthermore, such destitution is characterized by unsatisfactory social conditions, which include high

infant and maternal mortality rates, low literacy levels, and poor health (Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 2005). Therefore, education is essential to build the knowledge and skills necessary for increased agricultural productivity, improved health, and enhanced socio-economic well-being. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) acknowledges the role of education in its key planning document: '[Education] is a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless' (MGDS, 2006). The centrality of the role of education is underscored in this statement hence the need to address the aforementioned challenges through enhanced funding to the sector.

Malawi continues to rely heavily on donor financing of the education sector, which is supported by several DPs in a combined effort to improve the prevailing situation. Active agencies include the Department for International Development (DFID) – a traditional donor from the time of independence; the African Development Bank (ADB); the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); the German Development Bank (KfW); the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ); the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Food Programme (WFP); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA); and the World Bank (WB). Donor funds are coordinated by the Ministry of Finance in accordance with the Paris Declaration framework and the Accra Agenda for Action (Ng'ambi, 2010).

Donor support to the sector primarily takes the form of improvement to quality, equity and access to free primary education (FPE). Indeed, the primary school grade repetition rate had increased to 20 percent by 2006, and is currently one of the highest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009; Ng'ambi, 2010). This is largely due to the poor quality of education on offer, whereby the number of children who reached a minimum level in English reading, for example, decreased by 50 percent from 1998 to 2004, by which time it had dropped to barely 9 percent (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009).

This suggests that donor support to the education sector is still very much needed to address challenges in the system that are largely due to inadequate funding. For example, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) budget was reduced from 27 percent of the national budget in 1994/95 to approximately 14.1 percent in 2007/08, which had a negative effect on the implementation of sector programmes (Ng'ambi 2010).

Malawi underwent a major political change in 1994, from a one-party state under the autocratic rule of Dr Banda to a multi-party state. Such an innovation was brought about because the people of Malawi believed that the Banda government had failed them in several ways; particularly in respect of human rights and freedom, which had been violated under the previous regime. The education system of the Banda government also remained highly elitist, effectively perpetuating the colonial era practice of limiting access to the privileged few owing to the fact that the majority of parents could not afford to send their children to school (Chimombo, 2009; Rose, 2002).

Therefore, upon winning the democratic elections of 1994, the first multi-party government of Bakili Muluzi made a deliberate policy decision to improve the national situation. Accordingly, it adopted a development strategy that promoted smallholder agriculture (as opposed to the large-scale farms that prevailed during the Banda era), expansion of the private sector, and improved delivery of basic social services (Chimombo, 2009; Rose, 2000).

Thus, the first democratic government landmark achievement was the introduction of free primary education (FPE) in 1994. This policy was implemented in order to meet the demand for greater access to education by the Malawian people and the international agenda for education as set at the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA). It was also designed as a means of executing the World Bank-supported poverty alleviation programme (PAP), which was drawn up following the first multi-party elections and associated low enrolment with the inability of many Malawians to pay school fees, among other issues (Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 1995).

Therefore, 1994 not only signalled the beginning of a new era in the country's political domain, but also in its education system. Consequently, the Malawian education system can be categorized according to three main phases: the colonial era, post-independence: the Banda era, and post-independence: the democratization era.

2.2 A Brief History of Education in Malawi

2.2.1 The Colonial Era (1891–1963)

Malawi's education system was fashioned after that of its colonial masters, initially taking the form of a "4-3-3" system, that is, four years of primary, three years of junior secondary and three years of senior secondary education. This was later changed to a "5-3-4-2" system that comprised five years of junior primary, three years of senior primary, four years of basic secondary education and two years of study for external examinations, at the end of which students took the British General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE O level) (Ng'ambi, 2010). The financing of education was initially only made possible through donations and the payment of school fees by overseas missions (Ng'ambi, 2010; Rose, 2002), but this was later changed, as explained below.

During the colonial era, education was provided mainly by missionaries who charged fees, and 'the focus of the missionaries on education was to enable Christians to read the Holy Bible' (Ng'ambi, 2010, p.21). Accordingly, the missionaries adopted the view that if Africans learned to read and write, their evangelical mission would be easier to accomplish (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002). However, the broad aim changed over time and education was extended to cover other subjects such as general reading, writing, arithmetic, carpentry, bricklaying and needlecraft. However, there was no state coordination in terms of either policy or standards until 1907, when the colonial government began to provide funding that was initially directed towards the unification of the education system (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002; Malawi EFA Assessment Report, 2000); although such support was maintained at the comparatively low level of only ten percent of the required total budget until 1920 (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002).

However, later, the government became significantly more involved in education administration, a development that was facilitated by the Phelps Stokes Commission of 1924, which recommended the establishment of an agency that would be responsible for coordinating and supervising schooling provided by the missionaries, and evaluate the curriculum (such as it was) that they were offering (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002). Subsequently, the colonial government established the Department of Education in 1926; hence, by 1940, the government had assumed more control over education and had begun to set curriculum standards (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2002).

Nevertheless, the financing of education was initially only made possible through donations and the payment of school fees by overseas missions (Ng'ambi, 2010; Rose, 2002). Amongst other strategies, the Phelps-Stokes Commission report of 1924 recommended the setting up of a grant-in-aid system that also emphasized the education of girls and led to the establishment of such a provision by the government in 1927, which continued to the post-independence period (Rose, 2002; Ng'ambi, 2010). From personal experience working in the education sector in Malawi, I observed that this policy had been maintained during the post-independence era to support mission schools – also known as grant-aided schools; a finding corroborated by Ng'ambi (2010) and the Malawi EFA Assessment Report (2000). However, limited support to education by the colonial government suggests that very few people were able to gain access to it during this era, thereby denying them the opportunity to develop and become productive citizens.

Secondary education was accorded even less attention during the colonial era and there were then very few secondary schools in the country (Ng'ambi, 2010; Malawi EFA Assessment Report, 2000). This further indicates the extent to which education expansion was constrained during the colonial era, thereby leaving a big gap in the system for the post-independence government to fill.

From the onset of colonization, the Malawian education system was constrained in terms of expansion due to inadequate funding, donations from missionaries and income through school fees proving inadequate to meet the requirements of the system. As

observed earlier, even after the colonial government began to support public education, this assistance still fell short of the total requirements of the sector at that time, thereby creating both access and funding gaps that would later require redressing. The focus on urban areas in the provision of education and reliance on self-help for rural areas during the colonial era (Rose, 2002) entailed obvious inequality in the system, regardless of well-intentioned policies that ostensibly ensured that the inadequate education budget was augmented and communities involved in the education of their children. In essence, such attempts seemed to defer the resolution of a problem that meanwhile only grew bigger.

2.2.2 Post-independence: the Banda Era (1964–1992)

During the period immediately following independence, although most schools were nominally controlled by the government, they were owned by missionaries (Ng'ambi, 2010). However, the government gradually assumed responsibility for funding the sector, including policy direction (Kadzamira and Kunje, 2000). Although efforts to expand education were made, the government largely maintained the colonial strategy of non-expansion with regard to the primary level, a policy expressed in the establishment of a few additional government primary schools, but concentration on secondary and higher education.

The aim of education during this era was to develop a competent workforce with relevant expertise to fill jobs in government offices to a certain extent, but mainly in the agricultural and technical sectors; a strategy that was later reflected in the 1974–76 Education Policy Paper (Chimombo, 2009; Rose, 2002). Although this move favoured the development of higher education, the policy of slow localization adopted in respect of the civil service suggests that the foundations of schooling at the primary level were being undermined, which had repercussions that would later affect both secondary and higher levels. This further entailed less investment in primary education than was anticipated.

In order to fulfil the new strategy for the education sector, the Banda administration focused on the expansion of secondary education, which was viewed as critical to the

economy and the development of the modern sector (Rose and Dyer, 2006), by building one so-called government day secondary school in each district, institutes that were less expensive to run than the colonial boarding schools (Malawi Government Economic Report, 1966).

From my personal experience working in the education sector in Malawi, I observed that the Banda government also established distance learning opportunities for secondary school students via Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) centres throughout the country. The expansion programme increased access to 8,000 students in 1967, an enrolment that in 1972 rose to 12,800 places that were offered in excess of 60 schools (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011).

Furthermore, due to a perceived need to address human resource requirements in filling posts in the new government, the administration also focused on higher education (Malawi Government Economic Report, 1966), founding the University of Malawi in 1964, which having begun operations the following year, by 1990 had an enrolment of approximately 4,829 students, 26 percent of whom were female (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011).

Other countries such as Tanzania that had recently gained independence followed the socialist practice of introducing mass education (Rose, 2002). However, the first Malawian Education Development Plan (1973–80) drawn up in 1973 placed the emphasis firmly on secondary and tertiary education, which also meant that more funding was directed towards these levels. Yet, it was too broad, its strategies were unclear, and it thus failed to make an effective impact on education (Chimombo, 2009). Nevertheless, the second Education Development Plan (1985–95) was regarded as being more focused, clearly specifying key areas and targets that not only included access, quality and efficiency, but also highlighted universal primary education (UPE) as a goal for the first time (Kadzamira and Rose, 2003; Chimombo, 2009).

Nevertheless, the success of both the first and second education development plans was short-lived due to the government's lack of financial resources to implement the policies (Chimombo, 2009). Unfortunately, such common financial constraints in the

Malawian context could be misinterpreted as meaning that the policies themselves were flawed, hence the perceived need for new ones perpetuating the proliferation of policy documents that were never really implemented beyond an initial short period due to lack of funding, as observed by Booth et al. (2006). This further indicates how a lack of financial resources can negatively affect not only education programmes, but also the implementation of well-intentioned sector policies. An example of inadequate funding during the Banda era is demonstrated in the expenditure on education as a percentage of total recurrent government expenditure, which was 16.5 percent in 1967/68 and dropped to 11.8 percent in 1979/80 (Rose, 2002).

2.2.3 Democratization: the Muluzi Era (1994–2004)

This era is characterized by the introduction of FPE, which, although celebrated by most of the country owing to its initial spectacular impact on access to primary education, failed to sustain such optimism in the long term. Enrolment increased from 1.9 million in the 1993–94 academic year to almost three million in 1994–95 (Chimombo, 1999; Rose and Dyer, 2006; World Bank, 2004). However, these unforeseen dramatic consequences only created more problems in the form of unmanageably large class sizes resulting in congested classrooms; insufficient teaching and learning materials; inadequate infrastructure that witnessed classes being taught in the open air; and the recruitment of 18,000 untrained teachers in an attempt to meet the demand (Ministry of Education, 1994; Rose and Dyer, 2006).

The impact of FPE not only put pressure on the primary sector, which had been neglected for a long time, but also on secondary and tertiary education. These problems arose from the lack of a well-designed plan that took into consideration all key policy issues and translated them into goals at the implementation stage (World Bank 2004; Chimombo, 2009). Although Chimombo (2009) argues that the country should have prepared for this innovation more thoroughly and anticipated the consequences of such a huge increase in enrolment in order to prepare the system adequately – which is true to a great extent – the fact remains that even with such a level of preparation, there was still a major challenge in funding the implementation of the initiative. Therefore, this created even greater need for donor funding to address the situation.

Consequently, due to the huge strain on the education system created by FPE, the Ministry of Education responded by producing a paper called the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) in 1995. This document was designed to guide the development of the education sector, identifying policy and prioritizing sector programmes (Chimombo, 2009). The document also provided a guide to the donor community in order to ensure efficiency and the flow of funds in the education system (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001). The government also sought financial support from both local and international donors and development partners to assist in the implementation of FPE. The FPE policy coincided with World Bank education funding reform of 1995. As a result, Malawi benefitted from the newly revised loans, and, in accordance with the conditions attached to them, the influence of human capital was confirmed and reflected in the PIF (Chimombo, 2009).

Initially developed as a direct response to problems created by the FPE, the PIF was not very successful, since in attempting to repair the damage caused by the unplanned adoption of the former, policy was prioritized at the expense of policy implementation (Chimombo, 2009). The objectives of FPE might have been laudable in terms of increasing access, eliminating inequality between groups, and sensitizing communities to the importance of education (Kadzamira, 2003) – and, moreover, seem to have been achieved, albeit briefly. Yet, the impact of the dramatic increase in enrolment on the education system took a toll on sector resources that resulted in compromising the quality of education (Kadzamira and Chibwana, 2000; Kadzamira, 2003), which tended to have a counter effect on access, perpetuating the very inequality FPE was intended to eliminate, as children were inadvertently rejected from the system due to adverse conditions.

Following these events, the Ministry of Education and its development partners felt the need to revise the PIF in 1999. The development of the PIF was an attempt to formulate a long-term development strategy for the education sector that would establish a clear set of policy priorities, which, in turn, would guide donor interventions and ensure a systematic approach to investment in the sector (Policy and Investment Framework, 1999). As Chimombo (2009) observes, the intention was to explicitly outline the

problems on the ground and suggest policies and strategies to be adopted in order to solve them (Chimombo, 2009).

The revised PIF's key areas of focus are access, equity and quality across the different levels of education. It also recognizes the importance of technical and vocational training in accordance with human capital theory. The mission statements for all levels of education express the common goals of building human capital, imparting knowledge and skills, an agenda of sustainable economic growth, and poverty alleviation (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001).

Although human capital theory is not concerned solely with education, the empirical measures of growth and returns on investment have mostly been applied to this sector, hence its continued influence on education policy and planning. The fundamentals of human capital theory are rooted in the notion that economic growth is derived from investment in people (Blundell, et al., 1999). Although Sweetland (1996) perceives education as having many benefits, including improved health, reduced fertility rate, enlightenment, and the realization of one's rights, these qualities are rather difficult to measure; therefore, this explains the extensive focus on economic growth, which can be measured empirically. Therefore, education takes precedence over other sectors in prioritizing policy at macro level, as was the case in the Malawian context when developing the MGDS.

The democratic era of Bakili Muluzi thus marked the dominance of the influence of human capital theory in the provision of education in Malawi, an approach that was characterized by even greater expansion of the secondary education sector, with the World Bank playing a major role in supporting the policy (Rose and Dyer, 2006). However, with few public resources, secondary and tertiary education remained elitist (Chimombo; 2009), these education levels actually are becoming less accessible due to high costs and limited space.

University enrolment increased from 3,526 in 2002 to 7,400 in 2005, a figure that includes the 1,302 students enrolled in parallel programmes (Government of Malawi, 2005), that is, courses in which students who qualify for university entrance are given

the opportunity to attend classes alongside those enrolled on conventional programmes but who live off campus due to limited accommodation.

Although it is being addressed, the implication of a trend whereby there is limited access to higher levels of education due to the lack of government finances to undertake further expansion is that a significant proportion of the population will be left powerless to contribute to the fundamental changes in economic growth and development that are envisaged in the MGDS. The situation characterizing the education system in Malawi suggests that there must be additional funding to the sector to support the implementation of new education policies and strategies if successful progress across all levels of education is to be ensured in order to realise the aspirations expressed in the MGDS and the PIF.

2.3 The Current State of the Education System and its Challenges

The education system continues to follow one of the broad aims of the government, which is to alleviate poverty. The Government of Malawi also recognizes the importance of education as a critical element in the development and nurturing of an educated leadership and effective governance (Policy and Investment Framework, 2001).

Basic education is provided mainly by public institutions, which enrol 99 percent of pupils at the primary level and 77 percent of those at the secondary level (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009). The total school education cycle amounts to 16 years, which is divided into three main phases, comprising 8 years of primary, 4 years of secondary, and 4 years of university education (Ng'ambi, 2010; World Bank, 2004). At the end of the primary cycle, students take the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination, which determines their eligibility for entrance to the secondary level. However, not all students who pass the examination are enrolled in secondary school due limited space (Ng'ambi, 2010; Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009). Those who do complete their secondary education also take an examination known as the Malawi School Certificate Examination, which determines eligibility for university. Again, university places are extremely limited, meaning that an even smaller

number of secondary school students who pass the examination are able to proceed to tertiary education (Malawi Country Status Report, 2009).

Thus, the Malawian education system continues to face many challenges, particularly at the primary level, including access, quality, equity, and internal efficiency (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001a). Indeed, the sector has not yet fully recovered from the effects of the main policy reform of FPE, some of which are indicated above. A specific problem confronting the education system at primary level comprises high repetition and dropout rates. More than ten percent of eligible children remain out of school (mainly the hard to reach, orphans, vulnerable, girls and those with special learning needs). Additionally, although almost all children in Malawi enter Standard 1, only 40 percent reach Standard 4; 30 percent Standard 6; and only 26 percent complete Standard 8 – and of those who do finish their primary education, only 16 percent are girls (Kadzamira, 2005).

As Chimombo (2009) also observes, one of the biggest challenges facing the Malawian education system is quality, which, over the years, has deteriorated across all levels, necessitating urgent action to reverse the situation. Indeed, there is still a large proportion of unqualified teachers, poor teacher to pupil ratios, and a lack of resources, all of which affect the quality of education implemented under such a system. Yet, quality is an important consideration if the government is to benefit from its investment in education. Although the formulation and implementation of plausible strategies is required if such investment is to provide returns, this also necessitates greater funding to a sector that is already under-resourced in comparison to other sub-Saharan African countries (Malawi Local Education Donor Group, 2009).

Evidence from the recent Malawian Education Country Status Report (2009) confirms that there are many challenges confronting the education system, principally:

- Poor teaching quality, test scores and national examination pass rates, according to the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ)

- A severe shortage of teachers at the primary level, with a student to teacher ratio of 80:1 in 2007 (a drop from 63:1 in 2000) and a student to qualified teacher ratio of 88:1
- Access to each subsequent level of education suffers from greater location and income disparities, with a difference in the primary completion rate of 14 percent between boys and girls; 34 percent between urban and rural students; and 44 percent between the richest 20 percent of the population and the poorest 20 percent
- Technical education, vocational and entrepreneurial training (TEVET) is fragmented with very low enrolment rates
- Higher education enrolment is one of the lowest in the world
- Primary education enjoys the largest share of recurrent education expenditure, at 44 percent of the total (but which is largely due to the highest recruitment of teachers being at this level); higher education is allocated 27 percent; and secondary education is assigned 22 percent; while the total share for pre-school, literacy, TEVET and teacher training does not amount to more than 7 percent
- Low priority is given to early childhood development (ECD) and literacy

The following quotation summarizes and emphasizes the extent of the problem, and not only the context in which the Malawian education system must operate and develop, but also the anticipated amount of financial resources needed to address the challenge:

The Malawian education system has to develop within a heavier demographic context than that of its neighbouring countries [original emphasis]. Malawi's population, estimated at 13 million inhabitants in 2008, is increasing at the rate of 2.4 percent per year. The 5–16-year-old age group represents 37 percent of the total population. This is the highest proportion of that age group in the entire Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. It is estimated that the population growth rate will slowly decrease, but that the primary school age group (6–13 years old) will increase by 20 percent between now and 2018 (Malawi Country Status Report, 2009, p.4).

Based not only on the various definitions and principles of the SWAp (Buchert, 2002), but also on a comparison with the project approach – which has failed to yield the desired results, and is consequently blamed for the fragmentation of the sector and alienation of the government in removing it from the centre of control in handling aid

(Hamblin, 2006) – most stakeholders remain focused on the potential of the new modality, and proceed on this basis as the best chance of overcoming challenges. The optimism for the Malawian education SWAp is reflected in the section of the NESP entitled *A Sector Wide Approach to Development of the Sector*, as revealed in the following quotation:

MoEST, together with its partners, has explored the potential of adopting a sector-wide approach to the planning and development of the sector. It recognizes that a sector-wide approach (SWAp) is an approach to service delivery that brings Government and partners together in a manner, which promotes national ownership, alignment of sector objectives, and coherence of financing and harmonization of procedures. MoEST perceives a SWAp as providing a solution to problematic issues arising from a traditional project approach. These issues may include: a compromised holistic impact on the sector; a relatively narrow focus; the emergence of parallel management and support systems; and skewed national resource allocation. MoEST also believes that benefits arising from a SWAp include linking macro-level policies and plans to sector-level strategies, and the closer alignment of major programmes with the budgetary structures and processes set out in the Medium Term Economic Framework (MTEF).

The NESP provides a strong basis for a SWAp, mapping, as it does, issues across the whole sector and presenting a complete picture of issues, needs, major strategies and priorities. **The NESP also now forms the basis of all investment in (by Government of Malawi and all Development Partners) and development of the sector for the ten-year planning period. Future decisions about funding will be based upon this plan** [original emphasis] (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, August 2006, p.6).

Such blind optimism expressed at the time of the development of the NESP cannot go unchallenged, especially in the wake of the questions and criticisms raised by Buchert and Epskamp (2000), which reveal that there were difficulties in complying with the principles of a SWAp at the implementation stage. However, the education reform proceeded on the basis that, among other things, it would enhance funding to address sector challenges.

Thus the Bingu wa Mutharika era which followed the Muluzi reign in 2004 is mainly identified with reforms such as the NESP and the MGDS. President Bingu implemented reform processes at a time when the country enjoyed good aid relations owing to his initial tough stand against corruption, and the exercise of good fiscal discipline and governance, which witnessed the resumption of the flow of aid that had been withheld

during Muluzi's last years in power. To begin with, Bingu's term of office showed significant steady progress in terms of macroeconomic conditions and indicators that was considered worthy of recognition by the international community. Unfortunately, such promise was short-lived, just as the introduction of FPE during Muluzi's era had been, as the government seemed to drift away from its original commitment to good governance (Wroe, 2012). Not long after the expulsion of the British High Commissioner all the other donors withdrew assistance to Malawi. This had a negative effect on aid, since China does not support the country in all sectors as the international donor community had done; and, as a result, Malawians began to experience the negative effects of aid withdrawal.

Malawi, which until four years ago had diplomatic ties with the Republic of Taiwan, made a sudden shift in its international relations policy to establish diplomatic links with the People's Republic of China, based on my knowledge as a citizen living in the country at that time. This change was made almost immediately after Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika spoke at the UN General Assembly, making a strong appeal to all to support the Taiwanese government in its bid for recognition. There was speculation that perhaps this dramatic attempt to persuade the entire world community of Taiwan's political legitimacy was in some way made as a calculated bid to gain the direct attention of the powerful People's Republic of China, and prompt it to turn its attention to Malawi just as it had with neighbouring Zambia.

Accordingly, the incident marked the exit of the Taiwanese government from the Malawian aid arena and the entrance of China as a powerful donor that seemed to be flexible enough to accommodate some major development and construction projects. Subsequently, China has maintained an influential presence in the country, not only in political terms, but also with regard to the commercial sector. In addition both critics and proponents of Bingu's stance seem to link the influence of China to the bold step taken by the former president to expel the British High Commissioner ostensibly on account of criticism of deteriorating governance (Collins, 2010).

However, there have been many policy reverses in Malawi with the inauguration in April 2012 of President Joyce Banda, who has already demonstrated strong positive

steps towards the recovery of an economic situation, which had hitherto been suffering from mismanagement and the withdrawal of aid. Based on her recent press releases President Banda hopes to make further headway on developing the mining, tourism and agricultural industries to enhance the economy.

2.4 Education Reform and the Involvement of DPs

The Malawian education sector has undergone significant policy reform over the past two decades in an attempt to respond to external pressure emanating from the demands of international development aid, which is linked to international targets (Colclough, 2005; King and Rose, 2005). Such assistance has also been associated with the macroeconomic policies of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund, which, it is argued, have tended to undermine the role of the state and promoted neo-liberal economic policy prescriptions (Malhotra, n.d.; George, 1999; King, 1992).

As has been indicated earlier, the Government of Malawi's major education reform process can be traced back to 1994 when the country first became a democracy after ushering in a new government that had promised free primary education (FPE) in its election manifesto, which it indeed introduced in its first year in office (Rose and Kadzamira, 2003). This policy was largely aligned to the WB Poverty Alleviation Programme, which was an initiative launched in the same year that emphasized the role of education in reducing destitution (Smith, 2005).

As part of this reform, the process of switching to a SWAp was initiated in 1999 when, in response to the requirements of international aid trends, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture developed the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), which was viewed as a step towards developing a long-term development strategy for the education sector (Policy and Investment Framework, 1999). The PIF provided a timely opportunity for the ministry to review its 1995–2005 education strategy in order to establish a clear direction for policy priorities and reforms in the sector (Ministry of Education, Sports and culture, 1999).

During the development process of the PIF, DPs, and CSOs and NGOs started working closely together in thematic groups to develop the policy document and ensure that it was well balanced. These thematic groupings evolved into one education sector group that conducted regular meetings with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (as it had by then become), thus marking the beginning of a SWAp partnership that embraced civil society in the development agenda (Joint Sector Review Report, 2006). This period also witnessed a change from the commonly used terminology of “donors” to “development partners”, or “cooperating partners”, some government officials using the two new names interchangeably. Education joint sector reviews were introduced after the development of the PIF, which were intended to assess progress in the sector based on indicators and targets identified in the PIF document. The joint sector reviews were introduced as an annual exercise, a process that continues to the present. Thus, the purpose of involving DPs was to support the government with funding and technical expertise in the SWAp process.

Vision 2020: National Long-Term Development Perspective for Malawi was also developed in 1999 and this policy document has continued to guide subsequent development efforts. It steers the implementation of medium-term policies such as the MGDS, which incorporate the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) that was developed in 2002, the Malawi Economic Growth Strategy, and various other sector strategies and policies (OECD, 2007; Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 2005). Formulated in 2006, the MGDS represents an overarching framework for addressing poverty and economic growth. Additionally, during the development of the MPRS in 2002, the thematic groups continued working together in partnership, as was the case with the PIF (Joint Sector Review Report, 2006). The coherence provided by Vision 2020 is crucial to the effectiveness of policies and strategies, although there has been a tendency to depart from such a format owing to the political aspirations of individual leaders, a ploy that only derails progress and affects donor funding; as was the case when Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) withdrew its much-needed aid to Malawi (Van der Meer et al., 2007).

As part of ongoing government reorganization, in 2001, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology embarked on a further programme of significant restructuring

known as PCAR. This initiative started as a project, the principal goal of which was to ensure the development, implementation and monitoring of a basic national primary curriculum that addressed both the academic and non-academic needs of students, including strategies for preventing and coping with HIV and AIDS (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001b). The PCAR intervention secured two DPs in DFID and GTZ, which cooperated to support the project. However, the partnership around the implementation of the PCAR incorporated further DPs including CIDA, UNICEF and USAID (PCAR Risk Assessment for the Supply Chain of Standards 2 and 6, 2007). However, government funding for the implementation of PCAR remained insufficient (Ng'ambi, 2010).

Subsequently, from 2004, operating in a SWAp partnership, the Government of Malawi, DPs and civil society embarked on the development of the NESP, which became a widely recognized landmark reform. Consequently, the NESP was distinguished as the main SWAp document that operationalized education policy aims.

However, the process of developing the NESP was a protracted one and major amendments had to be made in order to align it with the requirements of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), as the functioning of an effective SWAp partnership was also regarded as being one of the conditionalities of the FTI (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009). Consequently, the government utilized the education SWAp opportunity to develop an NESP that could be adapted to facilitate its application for FTI funds. As a result, Malawi struggled for a long time to qualify for the initiative's funds – the aid package that was expected to contribute towards improving the education sector in order to register progress on EFA targets and the MDGs (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009). This raises the question of the appropriateness of the criteria that the WB applies when assessing countries for FTI funds – now known as Global Partnership for Education – (Rose, 2005). Introducing stringent conditionalities could mean that crucial international development aid is denied to those countries that cannot easily meet the macroeconomic conditions for accessing the support they need. This further suggests that such requirements may well defeat the very essence of the aim of aid provision in the interests of meeting international targets on time.

Samoff (1999) voices a similar concern in terms of the multifaceted role that international development aid has assumed. Addressing domestic education sector challenges whilst at the same time striving to achieve international targets has further complicated aid provision and rendered developing countries vulnerable to the conditionalities of aid agencies, as was the case in the Malawian context whereby the education sector became a casualty of such conditionality when Denmark decided to discontinue its aid programme in 2002. The Danish government acted on the basis that the Government of Malawi had failed to live up to the conditions of strengthening its administration, improving governance and reducing corruption (Van der Meer et al., 2007). Following this abrupt withdrawal of assistance, the Malawian education sector experienced many setbacks because ‘the volume of Danish support to Malawi’s educational [sic] sector was substantial’ (Van der Meer et al., 2007, p.9); thus, emphasizing the effects of the country’s heavy dependence on donor funding.

In spite of internal policy reform that has responded to the demands of changing trends in international development assistance and the main reform policy of FPE (which has yielded increases in enrolment of over 60 percent) (Rose and Dyer, 2006), the Malawian education system is still facing many challenges that require enhanced funding to the sector. Even with additional FTI funds amounting to US\$90 million that Malawi obtained in 2010, combined with supplementary assistance from all the DPs operating in the sector, there is still an estimated shortfall of US\$130 million in the execution of the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), a medium-term initiative for the operationalization of the NESP (Malawi Local Donor Group, 2009). All this serves to underscore the magnitude of a financing requirement in the education sector that has remained persistently substantial from the colonial era right up to the present. Thus, the expectation that a SWAp would transform this situation, enhance funding to the education sector, and consequently address the various challenges in the system is high.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the context of Malawian education reform. It has highlighted changes in international development assistance and their link to the initiation of internal education reform in the country. The chapter has also identified challenges in

the Malawian public education system in terms of funding, access, quality, equity, and internal efficiency. It has discussed the reasons for adopting the new modality in the expectation that a SWAp partnership would address these challenges.

Chapter 3

The Sector Wide Approach – A Product of Trends in International Development Aid

3.0 Introduction

The SWAp emerged at a time of innovation in international development that increasingly linked aid to international targets for poverty reduction, EFA and the MDGs (King and Buchert, 1999; Buchert, 2002; Walt et al., 1999; Colclough, 2005; Virtue, 2005; Smith, 2000; King and Rose, 2005). In terms of primary education, the pledges made by developed countries at the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in 2000 resulted in increased international aid to developing countries (King, 1992) that required a new modality – the SWAp – for the effective delivery of assistance.

3.1 Trends in International Aid and the Influence of Development Theories

This section focuses on the historical events that led to changes in international development aid; the effects of neo-liberalism on education aid, and the operationalization of the former during the Washington Consensus and Post-Washington Consensus periods; and how the notion of human capital drove WB investment in education based on analysis of the rate of return. Subsections also reveal how competing development theories influenced trends in the international aid arena, as the North, or Western countries, attempted to support the development of the South.

3.1.1 Historical Perspective

International assistance to education formed an aspect of global development cooperation (Forster, 1999). Accordingly, this was firmly established on new foundations of international relations during the decolonization period following the end

of the Second World War up to the 1960s. Thus, the concept of the North and the South was established, whereby the former represented developed or rich countries and the latter underdeveloped or poor countries. During this period, the North assumed internationally accepted responsibility for the development of the South, thereby heralding the beginning of international development cooperation (Forster, 1999). This model was shaped by the development theories that are discussed throughout this section.

Escobar (1995) and Foster (2001) also independently argue that the concept of “development”, which groups countries into “developed” and “developing” nations, evolved as a result of changes in international cooperation that emerged during the decolonization period. At this time, some Northern countries began to perceive conditions in Asia, Africa and Latin America as poor and therefore in need of new strategies to address their problems (Escobar, 1995). During the same period, many of these countries reflected on their conditions themselves and realized that they were underdeveloped. Therefore, they began to identify ways of developing; an advancement that they soon realized would mean subjecting themselves to certain interventions. Such thinking seems to have been largely influenced by modernization theory, a hypothesis that explains how society progresses according to the process of social development, which focuses on national growth and the belief that less-developed countries can eventually advance to a more developed status (Engerman (2004), and Przeworski and Papaterra (1997).

Thus, modernization theory addresses a country’s social progress and its outcomes, as observed by Engerman (2004), and Przeworski and Papaterra (1997). Since the theory asserts that a “traditional” society must progress to the level at which technological and economic advancement can begin to take place, subsequently, these qualities will further influence change in culture and societal values until such a society grows into a modernized state. Social change is produced as the country attempts to adapt itself to its environment and interacts with other nations. Thus, globalization has driven the spread of modernization over the decades (Engerman, 2004). Consequently, it is also argued that this theory mapped the path decolonized countries were to take in order to catch up with the West/North (Przeworski and Papaterra, 1997).

This is how the West/North began to assume the role of developing the South, and why international aid has continued to play a critical role in supporting development activities – including education reform (Forster, 1999). Moreover, following decolonization, international aid was provided to developing countries mainly through the project approach, a modality by which donors – who in most cases were erstwhile colonial masters – donated aid to a former colony in which they had economic interests or potential markets (Minch, 2010).

The link between changes in international cooperation in education and general changes in development cooperation after the Second World War are rooted in neo-liberalism and the development we see today came about largely as a construct of post-colonialism (Malhotra, n.d.). This commentator argues that in the last two decades, the role of the state as the primary development actor has been increasingly challenged and undermined by neo-liberalism, with the introduction of other major societal factors such as the market and civil society. He goes on to observe that during the same period, the government share of power and privilege – which is closely aligned to gross domestic product (GDP) – began to decline due to the effects of neo-liberal economic policy prescriptions and the external debt crises that many developing countries were subject to in the early 1980s.

It was during this period that dependency theory was developed in reaction to the economic stagnation and growing dependency of poor Southern countries on rich Northern or Western ones. The principal argument of this theory is that underlying relations between the North and the South (centre–periphery dynamics), and the resultant economic problems for the latter determine the inability of developing countries to gain total independence (Easterly, 2009). Thus, modernization theory – according to which attempts were made by the North to support the development of the South – was criticized by dependency theorists who believed that the “poor” state of Southern countries was not because they were yet to be modernized, as asserted by modernization theory, but because “rich” countries had exploited and caught them in a dependency trap. Accordingly, their fragility was exacerbated, and they were

consequently susceptible to further manipulation by the North (Przeworski and Papaterra, 1997).

Dependency theory has two main strands: the Marxist perspective and the structuralist perspective. The major difference between the two is that Marxists believe that North–South relations – and thus the prosperity gap – are a consequence of technological disparities and the Western advancement that led to early industrialization. The resource wealth of the South is ruthlessly exploited in exchange for indebtedness created through the importation of finished products. Accordingly, Marxists believe that the development of poor countries is not possible as long as the prevailing status quo is maintained (Easterly, 2009).

On the other hand, the structuralists are of the view that centre–periphery relations comprise more than just economics, and that the power of the North over the South is social and political. This view also places much emphasis on so-called “satellites” – the elite of the peripheral countries, and their interests and ability to make decisions. The question is do they really represent and control the decisions they make (Easterly, 2009), an issue that becomes more pertinent later in the thesis, when the nature of the SWAp partnership in the education sector is examined.

For now, suffice it to say that dependency theory encapsulates two main viewpoints: industrialization, as argued by Marxists; and economic–political relations between the North and the South that originate from colonial ties yet to be completely broken, as contended by structuralists – both of which seem to continue to influence the way in which international aid is delivered and managed.

King’s (1999) observation of changes in international development cooperation in virtually all sectors emphasizes the fact that the new aid modalities that ultimately paved the way for the SWAp assumed common currency in aid provision to the education sector, contending that in the 1990s, changes in international cooperation in the education sector were closely linked to innovations in development assistance.

Further to King (1999), Easterly (2009) highlights a recent shift in the development literature that indicates a change of focus from a transformational conception of aid to a lighter approach; research indicating that rather than attempt massive experimental programmes, the step-by-step small-scale intervention is more likely to achieve positive results. Although this new strategy has not yet been fully embraced by aid practitioners in policy discussions, Easterly (2009) contends that if the desired outcome is not initially achieved, there is room to learn and improve through such a marginal approach.

The transformational approach, on the other hand, has proved to bring about the opposite outcome – a lack of learning – with its tendency for DPs to recycle old ideas and policies; if they are not successful the first time around, the programme is discontinued until some years later when it is reintroduced as a new initiative. Paradoxically, such an approach also tends towards the problem of escalation, whereby if policies do not prove to be effective, they are traded in wholesale for a completely new set of more experimental strategies (Easterly, 2009).

The big question in the literature is whether to attribute failure to institutional weakness in the recipient country or failed DP strategies. The West/North has responded to this conundrum by fully blaming the South for its failure to develop, claiming that lack of effective reform is due to its inability to meet certain conditions such as setting up good institutions. Therefore, the cycle repeats itself, and aid agencies once again formulate an entirely new policy and set of conditions to accompany it (Easterly, 2009). This was the case with the 1981 Berg report on sub-Saharan Africa, wherein recipient countries were blamed for poor economic growth due to their inappropriate policies; an accusation that was used as a basis to justify WB structural adjustment programmes (Rose, 2002).

3.1.2 Neo-liberalism

As observed earlier, to a certain extent, Malhotra (n.d.) applies neo-liberalism as a concept to describe a market-oriented approach to development (economic and social). Neo-liberal policies are associated with the transfer of control over the economy from public to private hands in the belief that this will increase government efficiency and contribute to the improved economic health of the nation. Thus, from the 1980s, greater

attention was paid to the role of macro-economic stability; market-oriented policy reform; the role of the private sector; interactions between the public and private sector; and the potential contribution of civil society (Sagasti et al., 2005).

A scrutiny of the effects of neo-liberalism as expounded by Malhotra (n.d.), Sagasti et al. (2005), and Rose (2003) reveals that the world has continued to witness a macro-economic policy strategy as the dominant feature of development theory and practice for the past five decades. Such a policy initially emphasized the moderately socially oriented Keynesian economic indicators of full employment and social security. However, the dominant approach in the 1980s shifted to economic growth and the concurrent preoccupation with per capita GDP – which even included financial indicators covering the health of stock markets – that dominated economic neo-liberalism discourse during this period.

The principles of neo-liberalism can be traced to John Williamson's ten-point policy proposal, which gained consensus approval from the two Washington-based international economic organizations the World Bank and the IMF. In 1990, Williamson coined the term "Washington Consensus", the rationale of which was:

...to define the set of policy instruments associated with World Bank structural adjustment programmes and IMF stabilization programmes in the early 1980s, the main objective of which was to stabilize economies in severe disequilibrium and promote economic growth (Rose, 2003, p.70).

Rose (2003) affirms that these policy instruments symbolised the programme conditionalities to which countries that accessed IMF and World Bank loans in the 1980s were subject. Neo-liberal market-oriented principles and policies influenced IMF stabilization and WB structural adjustment programmes. The latter was a product of neo-liberal thinking that emerged in the early 1980s. It was an economic policy that was designed to assist or indeed rescue developing countries by offering loans and small interest subsidies on condition that their governments would adopt certain policies designed to help adjust the economic structure (Rose, 2003). One example of this was a policy that advocated a common market economy.

There were certain prescribed measures imposed on countries participating in structural adjustment, which included currency devaluation; government deficit reduction; tax reduction; privatization of state-owned industries; tightening of monetary policies; reduction of tariffs on imports; wage freezes; and social spending cuts. Consequently, structural adjustment programmes were heavily criticized due to the way they affected social expenditure in terms of service delivery. For example, when the government cut back on spending and wages were frozen there was a lot of pressure on the system to meet the demands of such a policy (Reimers, 1997). The result of this retrenchment was slow growth and, in the worst case, regressive development with all the potential negative social consequences that this entailed; a situation experienced by many developing countries that accessed WB loans – including Malawi during the Banda era – which adversely affected education indicators due to the commensurate increase in school fees (Rose, 2003).

3.1.3 The Washington Consensus – Operationalizing Neo-liberalism

As pointed out in the preceding section, the Washington Consensus was associated with the WB structural adjustment and IMF stabilisation programmes of the 1980s that were imposed on developing countries with the aim of stabilizing their economies (Rose, 2003).

Sagasti et al. (2005) and Rose's (2003) independent observations on development financing and neo-liberalism show that the pre-Washington Consensus period was characterized by a major transformation in development that broadened its conceptualization to include finance and investment; the quality of the labour force; the technological capability of the private sector; and government policy. Such amplification stemmed in the main from lessons learned from the development experience of the 1960s and 1970s when economic growth did not necessarily lead to improvements in social conditions.

Consequently, under the presidency of Robert McNamara, who was keen to eradicate GNP as a measure of development, the WB incorporated other concepts that focused on broader growth and poverty alleviation, in the recognition that markets were imperfect

and therefore required state intervention to correct distortions. The adoption of these strategies thus ultimately led to approaches that emphasized the realization of basic human needs (Sagasti et al., 2005; Rose, 2003). This expansion of the role of the WB included its involvement in development issues related to education, nutrition and population growth, which, in the 1970s, paved the way for the Bank to assume a dual identity as a development agency as well as a financial institute, emerging as a self-styled “knowledge bank” in the 1990s (Rose, 2003).

3.1.4 Post-Washington Consensus

Rose (2003, p.75) describes the post-Washington Consensus as ‘neo-liberalism with a human face,’ observing that the shift in focus came about because of the failure of structural adjustment programmes to produce positive social change; as well as recognition of the factors that were responsible for the success of the newly industrialized East Asian countries. She also acknowledges that the transition to the post-Washington Consensus was partly due to a need to address the political realities of recipient countries. However, she argues that the post-Washington Consensus was not founded on a critical analysis of the Washington Consensus and, in many ways, it continued with the same old principles. She thus cautions against the oversimplification of obviously complex political, social, cultural, and economic issues through the application of neo-liberal economic principles that regard the state from an economic efficiency viewpoint (Rose, 2003).

In a similar vein, Easterly (2009) challenges current aid efforts by posing the question of how outsiders can best fix internal problems that are deeply rooted in the historical and political contexts of recipient countries. This view indicates that there is some substance in dependency theory, at least from the perspective of its argument around the causes of problems and how they have escalated. However, the theory has been widely criticized due in the main to its overestimation of Western power and influence through the historical colonization of the South. Accordingly, commentators argue that these poor countries have been wholly absolved of the blame for economic stagnation and gross underdevelopment when, realistically, perhaps they need to take some responsibility for their failure to catch up with the West/North:

Local political elites in these areas have almost invariably structured their domestic rule on a coalition of internal interests favourable to the international connection. Thus, it is not the sheer economic might of the outside that dictates the dependent status of the south but the sociological consequences of this power. The result...is that the basic needs of the international order must be respected by the south if this system is to continue to provide the services that the local elites need in order to perpetuate their rule in their turn (Smith, 1979, p.251).

Nevertheless, the notion of human capital continues to drive WB investment in education based on the analysis of rates of return. The focus of the WB on human capital can be observed in, for example, studies by Psacharopoulos (1994), and Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) that generated mass data from various countries whose evidence revealed similar results on the rate of return for different levels of education; private versus social returns; and country groups. Of all the levels of education, the primary sector was found to provide the highest rate of return, in both private and social terms. The private rate of return was higher than its social aspect across all sectors of education, but the gap was much wider at the higher level (Psacharopoulos, 1994; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002). The same study also discovered that countries with different economic standings did not experience the same rate of return, evidence from various studies and estimates in differing countries revealing that those with low and medium incomes received the greatest returns.

Thus, as Rose (2003) observes, based on the highest rate of return for primary education, the human capital influence is evident during the post-Washington Consensus period in terms of WB focus on primary education and its role in poverty reduction. One feature of such a priority has been the Bank's increased lending to education, with the most funding going to the primary sector (Rose, 2003). This focus was seen to reinforce international agency and several governments' acceptance of primary education at two EFA world conferences in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 respectively, at which international donors promised to increase aid to the subsector (King, 1992, 2007; Rose, 2003).

Rose (2003) argues that rhetorically, the post-Washington Consensus embraces more instruments and broader objectives than are captured by human capital theory,

emphasizing the relation between the state and the market – as opposed to a state versus market approach. She underscores her point thus: ‘[The] emphasis of the post-Washington Consensus on more instruments and [a] broader objective provides an even greater opportunity for the prioritisation of education, seeing it as both a means to, and end of development’ (Rose, 2003, p.76).

The concept of human capital was first articulated by Adam Smith as early as the 18th century, but the theory really emerged in the 1960s and is now one of the most dominant hypotheses in development (Marshall, 1998). The theory has been championed by the two renowned economists Shultz and Becker. They expand on the notion that individuals acquire knowledge and skills in the process of production that are regarded as capital, and that a substantial part of this acquisition is a deliberate investment; the term “human capital” deriving from the fact that it becomes embedded in the individual, from whom it cannot be separated (Schultz, 1960; Becker, 1993).

Moreover, Shultz (1960) and Becker (1993) argue that similar to machinery in the production process, human skills, knowledge and ability may also be conceptualized as capital because they provide productive services; they can be regarded as inputs in the creation of a product that may be viewed as beneficial to the economy in the same way as any non-human device. Thus, the concept recognizes that it is through investment in education that people become more productive: knowledge and skills gained assist them to create or adapt to new ideas in order to capitalize fully on production (Blundell et al., 1999). Accordingly, human capital theory argues that such investment is highly beneficial in terms of increased productivity (Marshall, 1998). Indeed, it has been shown through several studies that investment in human capital is beneficial to both the individual and society (Psacharopoulos, 1994; Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2002).

Proponents of human capital theory also argue that it provides the reasons for wage inequality in the labour market. They suggest that people are rewarded based on their productivity, which, in turn, is affected by the level of their education and training. Therefore, they argue that a more highly educated and trained individual will be rewarded with higher earnings over time because he or she is perceived to be more productive (Blundell et al., 1999). Nevertheless, the concept of human capital is broad,

encompassing other stock such as health and social standing, and further aspects such as on-the-job training (Psacharapoulos, 1994; Psacharapoulos and Patrinos, 2002).

However, human capital theory has been criticized based on estimates pertaining to the rate of return of education. For example, Bennell (1996) questions the selectivity of the data gathered in sub-Saharan Africa in particular that is used by Psacharapoulos (1994), arguing that the sample from which they originate is not representative of country populations, and that methodology used in calculating the rate of return to education is suspect. Disparagement of such study methodology and of the entire human capital theory notwithstanding, based on a cost–benefit analysis, the WB officially acknowledged the value of human capital concurrent with the Washington Consensus neo-liberal agenda, declaring human capital development to be a critical element of poverty alleviation (Mundy, 2002; Rose, 2003). Subsequently, the Bank’s influence and its loans to various countries’ education sectors grew (Rose, 2003).

3.1.5 Linking Aid to International Targets

Colclough (2005) asserts that education MDGs can be traced back to the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, which prompted several subsequent conferences, some of which produced declarations reaffirming the right to education that have since been signed by the majority of countries. The general understanding in 1948 was that education should be free and compulsory, with higher education equally accessible to all based on merit. Since then, there has been a constant attempt to link aid to education. Colclough (2005) also points out that the tying of education aid to a poverty reduction strategy, EFA and the MDGs came about during this revolution.

However, it was not until the international World Conference on Education in Thailand that the global community saw the launch of the EFA movement and its espousal of a number of systemic reforms that basic education gained a prominent position on the development agenda – as noted above in the discussion on the Post-Washington Consensus – with the WB playing a key role in promoting human capital through funding to primary education in particular. Alongside this, came widespread political commitment to basic education on the parts of both developed and developing

countries, which led to increased international aid and, ultimately, the introduction of the new aid modality of the SWAp (King, 2005).

The 2000 Dakar World Education Forum adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, which aimed to achieve high quality education for all and a 50 percent increase in adult literacy by 2015. This marked an acceleration of the implementation of SWAPs, as 164 nations renewed their commitment to EFA, with developed countries pledging to give more aid to developing countries in an endeavour to meet EFA targets (Colclough, 2005;). All these events led to the linking of aid to the international targets of the MDGs and EFA, with the emphasis on adopting the SWAp as an effective modality for the delivery of development aid (King and Rose, 2005).

The FTI was launched in 2002 in the interests of supporting developing countries with funds in order to enhance their efforts towards achieving EFA goals (EFA-FTI Secretariat, 2011). Moreover, the functioning of an effective SWAp partnership that facilitated the development of a sound national education plan was an integral conditionality of the FTI – which is now known as the Global Partnership for Education (EFA-FTI Secretariat, 2011).

Turning more to the focus of the present study, Easterly (2009) indicates that the West's call for a 'big push' to save Africa is a recent phenomenon. He acknowledges that international and regional attempts have been made by the West towards this goal, but he points out that the West has been preoccupied with what it can do to redeem Africa rather than assessing the potential of the continent to develop on its own. And in view of the approaches alluded to earlier, Easterly (2009) argues that this sort of assessment implies that the West's ideas are right, it knows what is best for Africa, and the continent's current predicament is all its own fault for failing to embrace change. Moreover, "The idea that a society must have already attained good policy, good law and order, etc. in order to develop is like saying 'you need to be developed in order to develop' (Easterly, 2009, p.425).

A typical example of such a catch-22 is the set of conditionalities for accessing FTI funds whereby a country should already have a SWAp partnership; a comprehensive

national education sector plan; a fully costed implementation strategy; a financial management system; and a Ministry of Education with the capacity to implement the whole initiative (Malawi Education Country Status Report, 2009; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2009; Malawi Local Education Donor Group, 2009). This epitomises the issues of capacity that international aid partnerships must deal with. Therefore, it is important that whatever kind of intervention is implemented, it must account for shortfalls in local systems and work at strengthening them (Easterly, 2009).

Colenso's (2010) review of international targets provides an MDG analysis that includes the perspectives of both critics and proponents: 'The MDGs were agreed by nearly 190 countries at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, as part of a global compact to focus developing countries and development agencies on specific development outcomes' (Colenso, 2010, p.34). He also draws attention to the fact that the two education MDGs – which respectively target the attainment of universal primary education by 2015 (MDG 2), and gender, that is, the elimination of such disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels by 2015 (MDG 3) – were set in spite of broader international education targets previously agreed upon at EFA conferences in Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000 (Colenso, 2010).

Colenso (2010) thus cites both the critics' identification of shortfalls in MDG targets as well as the position of proponents who do not perceive any problem in attaining the goals. He goes on to highlight two connected challenges to the process of incorporating broader education aims into the two MDG targets. The first problem indicates that the MDGs reflect a further narrowing of the development agenda that stems from the Jomtien Declaration of 1990, which had already overlooked secondary education, skills development, and higher education – although the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 did reinstate early childhood education and adult literacy as components of the six Dakar EFA goals (Colenso, 2010). The main criticism of the MDG targets is that they 'further exclude key areas of education, including early childhood development, adult literacy (Robinson, 2005) secondary education (Lewin, 2005), skills development (King, 2005), and higher education' (Colenso, 2010, p.35).

The second argument concerns the excessive influence of donors in setting the MDG agenda. This is invariably done without proper consideration to the reality on the ground, where the prioritization of MDGs in the national education plans of countries that are heavily dependent on aid does not necessarily reflect their grassroots situations due to the influence of aid conditionalities (King and Rose, 2005).

In the same vein, King and Rose (2005) emphasize the need to align development assistance to recipient country priorities if aid effectiveness is to meet the requirements of the Paris Declaration framework, a notion that is summarized by Colenso (2010) thus:

Donors should trust the plans of governments and other national stakeholders and programme their aid together (harmonisation) in support of national plans and priorities (alignment), with clear results (results), for which states are accountable to citizens (accountability) (Colenso, 2010, p.41).

A further observation on the setting of international targets such as MDGs 2 and 3 is the assumption that “one size fits all”, which disregards the different stages of development from one country to another. In addition, Samoff (1999) describes ‘the multi-faceted role of international development aid,’ whereby attempts to address challenges in the education sector and achieve international goals have further complicated the provision of aid and, in the process, have contributed to the creation of a situation in which developing countries are left vulnerable to the conditionalities of donors.

3.2 The Call for a SWAp

The transition from the project approach to the SWAp was not made in a vacuum, but within the controlled environment of a changing political structure. International aid – which had hitherto mainly promoted neoliberal education policies and programmes – took a another twist with the end of the Cold War, when it began to concentrate more on assisting developing countries to meet the international targets of poverty alleviation, EFA and the MDGs (Novelli, 2010).

This move was largely influenced by the end of the Cold War with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, when aid provision began to shift its preoccupation with the forging of political allies (against the Soviet Bloc) to one that embraced democracy and good governance (Wangwe, 2002; Wroe, 2012; Novelli, 2010).

Therefore, unlike the 1980s – when developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa were subject to the aid conditionalities of the structural adjustment programme as they struggled to recover from recession – the 1990s heralded the dawn of the SWAp, a period that witnessed a trend whereby aid integrated commitment to democratic ideals with a focus on the development of national policies and strategies (Wangwe, 2002; Novelli, 2010) to make advances in the education arena.

3.2. 1 The Project Approach

Before moving on to discuss the SWAp, it is imperative to define what the project approach entailed. As pointed out in Section 3.1, the project approach was among those used during the decolonization period to aid developing countries. The literature on this modality tends to focus more on the failure of the approach rather than attempt to define it. Donors had the power to decide which projects to carry out and how they were to be managed, which included setting up implementation units with the former assuming full control and monitoring the utilization of funds (Foster, 2007). From the 1990s, the modality was widely criticized, being held accountable for the fragmentation of aid, as each donor tended to focus attention on its own areas of intervention at the expense of wider sectoral issues and the recipient government's needs and priorities (Forster, 1999; Schacter, 2001; Hamblin, 2006; Al-Samarrai, et al., 2001).

It has been argued that these shortcomings also contributed to failure in terms of intervention coordination and successful partnerships – critical prerequisites for aid effectiveness that were later advanced in respect of the SWAp approach (Schacter, 2001; Hamblin, 2006). Consequently, the project approach is generally associated with the failure to achieve aid effectiveness, as will be seen later in the description of the new aid modality, the SWAp.

The project approach has also been blamed for inadequate ownership on the part of the recipient government; the creation of parallel implementation units; the overstretching of local capacity due to a proliferation of initiatives implemented by different donors, unsustainability beyond the life of the intervention and its institutional development; and the duplication of resources that leads to waste (Forster, 1999; Schacter, 2001; Hamblin, 2006; Al-Samarrai, et al., 2001). Moreover, a common criticism of this approach in terms of development aid management is that it keeps the recipient government away from the centre of control (Hamblin, 2006).

According to Schacter (2001), the project approach also suffers from limitations in terms of accountability, a vital consideration around issues of governance in developing countries, which he attributes to the shortcomings of implementation strategies. Schacter (2001) goes on to argue that under the project approach, donors perceive accountability differently to the recipient government, this aspect normally being aligned to the needs and requirements of the providers of aid rather than project beneficiaries.

All these objections to the project approach inevitably led to the proposal of the new aid modality that is a crucial element of the innovation in international development cooperation under review in this chapter.

3.2.2 Definition of the SWAp

In order to understand the current impetus of this new modality, it is necessary to establish just what a SWAp is. All the literature reviewed describes the SWAp in a similar manner, although academic commentators tend to be more critical than descriptive, a stance that is due in the main to their understanding of dynamic differences between theory and practice. Indeed, many practical examples of SWAps implemented worldwide reflect a clear disparity between the principles of the modality and its application on the ground (Buchert, 2002).

As noted by Buchert (2002), different authors' definitions of the SWAp are founded on their various conceptions of its principles. The modality is also described based on a

comparison between what the project approach has failed to accomplish and what a SWAp is expected to achieve. Hamblin (2006) describes the SWAp as representing one of several comparatively new aid modalities that emerged in order to overcome the fragmentation and lack of sufficient ownership on the part of the recipient government that were manifested with the implementation of numerous discrete projects, which did not necessarily result in adequate support in terms of nationally identified development priorities.

The following quotations delineate the SWAp:

A SWAp is a process in which funding for the sector – whether internal or from donors – supports a single policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, and adopting common approaches across the sector. It is generally accompanied by efforts to strengthen government procedures for disbursement and accountability. A SWAp should ideally involve broad stakeholder consultation in the design of a coherent sector programme at micro, meso and macro levels, and strong coordination among donors and between donors and government (Overseas Development Institute, 2001, p.1).

The defining characteristics of a SWAp are that all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under Government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on Government procedures to disburse and account for all funds (Brown et al., 2001, p.7).

Courtney (2007) defines the SWAp in a very similar manner to the above descriptions, but with added emphasis on government ownership and common approaches. Similarly, King (1992) describes the SWAp in terms of its principles, highlighting the incorporation of sound policies, ownership and sustainability. It is notable that in defining the SWAp, most authors focus on its core principles.

In common with many other key stakeholders keen to achieve positive change, UNICEF views the SWAp in terms of the rhetoric around it as an exceptional opportunity to work in partnership; and ‘to place children, and the fulfilment of their rights and needs, at the centre’ (UN Economic and Social Council, 2003, p.3) of a process that develops sector programmes and policies. Furthermore, it is anticipated that education SWAp partnerships will play a significant role in mobilizing financial resources for the

realization of set international targets and goals appertaining to the sector (Malawi Local Donor Group, 2009).

However, beyond the rhetoric, the interests of different groups must be taken into account to determine why they might opt for a SWAp. People generally like SWAps owing to a coherence of procedure that addresses the fragmentation of donor support at country level. According to Riddell et al. (2000), for organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank, the SWAp offers extra opportunities to operate within the mainstream development agenda, including the setting of targets for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, MDGs and EFA. For governments, the SWAp offers more money, control and power. Finally, for DPs and donors, the SWAp reduces accountability, as recipient governments assume this role; and affords them greater agency effectiveness and interagency collaboration.

3.2.3 Principles of the SWAp

In defining the SWAp, the literature describes its principles and analyzes them in the light of experiences on the ground. To some extent, it also attempts to shed further light on the conceptual understanding of the SWAp as a modality for achieving partnerships and coordination of the effective delivery of international development aid. The main principles of the SWAp are partnership, government leadership, ownership by government, sector policies and strategies, capacity building, harmonization, alignment with government procedures and systems, coordination, and accountability (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005; Buchert, 1998).

The concept of partnership is crucial to the SWAp given that it revolves around the forging of an alliance to support a sector (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005). This is corroborated by (Buchert, 2002, p.), who observes that partnerships are central to the effectiveness of a SWAp. Moreover, in the context of international aid, the partnership represents the notion of aspiring to realize international unity (Fowler, 1997).

Hamblin (2006) recognizes the significance of the principles of the SWAp, underscoring the point that they were the basis for the initiation of the modality; and

emphasizes the importance of government ownership and coherence of procedures. In her comparative analysis of SWAp in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mozambique, Buchert (2002) suggests that stakeholders expect the principles of the modality to guide the implementation process, although she also observes that such a procedure is invariably subject to many pitfalls. Following a case study of an in-service health education programme implemented in a province of Cambodia, Courtney (2007) comments that although the partnership remains essential if a SWAp is to be effective, it is not easy to recommend the best mode of operation, an observation that suggests that coordinators should proceed with caution in terms of partners' interactions.

Hyden (2008, p.259) recognizes the Paris Declaration as 'a significant juncture in the history of development assistance and co-operation;' going on to argue that the principle underlying the shift to the Paris Declaration framework emphasizes national ownership, a goal that all should strive to achieve rather than an actuality that simply requires acknowledgement. Hyden (2008) also concedes that the current development partnership framework assumes a high level of trust among partners that can only be achieved through open dialogue, concluding that this can only be realized through DP understanding that such changes in international development aid cooperation must extend beyond mere policy to embrace politics.

Hyden (2008) outlines three main components of the Paris Declaration concept of which DPs should take note. The first is the "partnership" that aims at granting the aid-recipient government ownership and more say in the utilization of financial assistance; the second is the "harmonization" of aid that allows DPs to speak with one voice; and the third is an "understanding" of the cultural and political realities in which development policies are implemented.

Hyden (2008) asserts that this shift to the SWAp modality calls for a reassessment of the whole aid environment in which DPs operate and programmes are implemented, including the manner in which power functions in recipient countries. He argues that to date, DPs have operated on the assumption that there is a "negotiated order" between equal partners – DPs and aid recipient governments – and, consequently, a global agreement such that, 'The prevailing notion among the DPs expresses itself in the idea

of “power to”; power in their view indicates a capacity or ability, not a relationship’ (emphasis in original) (Hyden, 2008, p.263).

3.2.4 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 sets the framework for aid delivery, defining the conduct of the intervention partnership – including ownership of the development agenda by the recipient government and the incorporation of civil society – with the aim of rendering assistance more effective as national institutions determine development priorities (Hyden, 2008). The framework also sets the platform for increasing funding in order to help developing countries achieve the MDGs (King, 1992; Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005). As noted in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, the objective of the Paris Declaration was to strengthen the rationale for the SWAp. It not only refined the modality’s partnership model by stipulating the principles to be followed, but also ensured that it was more prominent than was previously the case so that the international development community might acknowledge it as the way forward for the realization of aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005).

The Accra Agenda for Action was endorsed on 4th September 2008, with the aim of augmenting the implementation of the Paris Declaration and reaffirming its aims. The key issue it addresses is the continued commitment of national governments to the eradication of poverty by cementing existing partnerships and forging new ones for the achievement of development goals (Accra Agenda for Action, 2008). The Accra Agenda also acknowledges that much work remains to be done in terms of addressing the global challenge of extreme poverty that hinders access to basic needs such as safe water, health care, and education, especially for women and girls. It recognizes that these challenges cannot be met through financial aid alone, but also necessitates input in terms of addressing democracy, governance, economic and social growth, inequality, and environmental conservation (Accra Agenda for Action, 2008).

The Accra Agenda identifies three major challenges that remain to be addressed. The first is country ownership. Developing nations need to adopt a strong leadership role in

the formulation of development policy, coordinating all those individuals engaged with and affected by it. The role of donors is one of support in respecting country priorities, investing in capacity building, and ensuring better use of their own systems in order to improve aid delivery. The second challenge concerns the building of more effective and inclusive partnerships. There is a management issue facing recipient countries in bringing together all development actors and ensuring effective utilization in the partnership of each of them for maximum impact in achieving development goals. The final challenge is to achieve development results and accountability for actions taken. The emphasis here must be on attaining tangible results from all the investment made and aid disbursed in a given country. Accountability on the part of the government and its DPs to taxpayers, parliament, and all the governing bodies concerned is paramount (Accra Agenda for Action, 2008).

3.2.5 The SWAp in Other Developing Countries

The literature provides insight into various aspects and experiences of the implementation of the SWAp in many countries. Based on his evaluation of the role of UNICEF in education SWAps in Eastern and Southern Africa, Virtue (2005) indicates a need to fund sector strategies that ensure government leadership and utilize ministerial procedure in financial disbursement. However, he further points out the need to resolve problems around the incorporation of projects into a SWAp.

Through a comparative analysis of the implementation of SWAps in Ghana, Mozambique and Burkina Faso, Buchert (2002) highlights some of the unsuccessful outcomes:

Conclusions of the comparative analysis have shown that what has been termed in these countries as [a] sector wide approach is far from a well-defined concept and far from one which has already been transformed effectively into reality. Neither can it be a formula to achieve what has not been achieved through project assistance. The approach should instead be considered to be a complex, evolving process that depends on flexible and adaptable learning by all involved parties. The underlying most critical issue may be how to include all involved parties, beyond government and agencies, in a negotiated process of change (Buchert, 2002, p.82).

Such a finding should raise serious questions for all actors involved in SWAp processes. Buchert's (2002) analysis indicates that there are many pitfalls in the process of implementing the modality; essentially, she reaffirms the all too often clear disparity between the rhetoric and the reality on the ground – where she found that principles were not applied – and highlights the challenge of defining and negotiating how partnerships should operate at implementation level. Courtney (2007) tends to corroborate Buchert's views on the SWAp partnership. However, Hamblin's (2006) more optimistic stance based on the rhetoric suggests that a SWAp can provide solutions to all aid problems associated with the project approach, and produce positive outcomes for both DPs and recipient government provided that the principles of the modality are adhered to.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) underscores the role of aid-recipient governments in coordinating the development agenda. Walt et al. (1999) recognize the link between coordination and aid effectiveness. Courtney (2007) highlights the problems around coordination, collaboration and sustainability experienced in the Cambodian SWAp, particularly in terms of integration in relation to achieving aid effectiveness. On the other hand, Hamblin (2006) identifies a SWAp in Papua New Guinea that has experienced effective aid coordination; a view that Samoff (2004) corroborates but with the proviso that capacity building may be required in respect of coordinators' expertise.

Courtney (2007) and Hamblin (2006) further indicate the importance of taking into consideration the roles of stakeholders at all levels, especially those operating at the grassroots such as school head teachers and their staff. Courtney (2007) also suggests the need for all-embracing collaboration and the development of partnerships that contribute to meaningful relationships among stakeholders. From her experience of a Ghanaian SWAp, Buchert (2000) underlines the significance of the competence of those entrusted with coordination, pointing out a link between the proficiency of the coordinator and programme outcomes.

Smith's (2005) study findings on ownership and capacity also highlight the positive attributes of a SWAp in terms of aid effectiveness. However, he questions the ability of

the modality to adequately address capacity issues at all levels – again, particularly that of those operating at the grassroots – which is critical if the desired results are to be achieved. Therefore, he suggests that greater attention should be paid to capacity building than ownership because the latter is dependent on the former, and is also necessary if sustainability is to be ensured – a long-term aim that requires serious consideration in any SWAp.

Samoff (2004) concurs with Smith (2005) on the significance of the capacity of those individuals involved in a SWAp. The former further emphasizes the need to respect the roles of both government and development partners, and to achieve effective partnership, leadership, ownership, coordination, and sustainability. He further identifies weaknesses in terms of government procedure in the disbursement of funds, inadequate coordination, and poor levels of ownership, concluding on a note of caution against continuing to operate in the project mode after a SWAp has been initiated (Samoff, 2004).

Based on their synthesis of findings of research into the changing practices of aid coordination across a number of countries, Walt et al. (1999) describe this aspect of the SWAp as an area of particular importance in reinforcing the principles of the modality. This is especially necessary given the prescribed shift from the project mode to the SWAp, the latter demanding broader coordination that covers all sectoral policies and strategies. Walt et al. (1999) also observe that while shared coordination among many people representing all stakeholders – both national and international – is essential, such a practice is also widely supported by DPs. It is also noted that very little attention at all has been paid to aid coordination in the health sector (Walt et al., 1999).

Murphy (2005) describes the experiences of a Ugandan SWAp that in the main preserved the principles of the modality at implementation stage with strong government leadership and ownership. He asserts that there is still a widely accepted notion that a SWAp is likely to achieve better results and aid effectiveness than the project approach. However, although the Ugandan SWAp is considered a model, it is not without its flaws. He identifies some of the challenges as capacity issues, inadequate procedures and mechanisms for coordination, and difficulty in establishing the turning

point to projects (Murphy, 2005). He also highlights problems with inadequate and underdeveloped procedures and coordination mechanisms. Evidently, even in such a model, there remains a disparity between the manner in which the SWAp is implemented and expectations around what it can achieve.

The OECD (2007) highlights other aspects of the SWAp, including the critical nature of ownership based on the need to improve aid coordination and ensure that the government takes the lead. It also emphasizes the strengthening of systems for monitoring and coordination, and the need to align aid with national development plans if it is to be effective. However, Samoff (2004) cautions against such a view, arguing that it overemphasizes government leadership at the expense of DP interests in transacting aid business. He also cites the power dimension, which cannot be overlooked as long as developing countries remain dependent on aid. Additionally, Samoff (2004) asserts that aid dependence and country-led development are incompatible: it is difficult to achieve the latter in contexts in which the former is manifest.

Samoff's (2004) observations concerning the problem of Burkina Faso's aid dependency, which militated against the principle of government independence, are articulated thus:

National and institutional interests remain important, but development partners collectively continue to instruct more than listen...thus undermining the dialogue and partnership that they claim to construct (Samoff, 2004, p.418).

These observations suggest that as we wrestle with notions of country-led development, we must recognize that (a) aid dependence and country-led development are incompatible, and (b) as long as the heavy reliance on foreign aid continues, the immediate task is to work on transparency and clarity about roles, rather than assuming that external agencies have no interest or can ignore them; or that they will subordinate their own sense of what must be done to decisions of national education officials (Samoff, 2004, p.416).

Other commentators have provided potential solutions to these problems, suggesting that specific measures be taken in the form of "partnership agreements" that provide clear guidelines for the conduct of stakeholders (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999; Foster, 2001). Samoff (2004) makes an analogous proposal in advocating the establishment of

transparency measures and clarification of the roles to be played by all stakeholders in a SWAp partnership. Similarly, in his review of the status of the SWAp, Foster (2001) underscores the importance of a memorandum of understanding, with clearly delineated responsibilities guiding the conduct of business being essential for the improvement of relations.

In his review of the provision and management of external support to education in Malawi, Foster (2007) asserts that the main obstacle militating against alignment and harmonization is the issue of transparency in the use of funds, a concern to which Samoff (2004) also alludes. Foster (2007) also indicates the need for a formalized, government-led process for aid coordination and dialogue at sector level.

Finally, Buchert and Epskamp's (2000) critique highlights the difficulties of complying with the principles of a SWAp at implementation stage, revealing that, so far, no country has been able to put the SWAp concept into full practice.

From the above discussion, it is clear that relations between principles and practical application become complicated and context specific at the implementation stage of a SWAp. It is therefore necessary that special care be taken when analyzing such a modality and the manner in which its principles are applied is critically examined in the light of the specific context in which they are implemented.

As a new modality, the SWAp was conceived at the global level, where, although decisions on international aid are made in accordance with the various and evolving development theories – as discussed in Section 3.1 and reiterated in other parts of the chapter – in most cases, this is done without due consideration to the situation on the ground or the involvement of those who are best placed to understand the challenges and dynamics to be addressed (Colenso, 2010). Such a contention could equally apply to the FTI and its requirements for accessing funds, as queried by Rose (2005). In a sense, this is an act of power that can be translated to the practical implementation of the SWAp process.

3.3 Theories of Power

Any SWAp partnership comprises a social relationship that is subject to power relations. There is an imbalance of power between DPs and the developing country/recipient government in a SWAp partnership, given that the former donate money to the latter. Literature reviewed claims that a recipient government becomes subject to its DPs not only due to its dependence on aid, but also on account of the controlling influence of the latter; as corroborated by Samoff (2004), who explicitly demonstrates the incompatibility between aid-dependence and leadership on the part of the recipient government when the interests of the donors take precedence over development.

Power emerges as an important concept in the literature review. There are several crucial issues highlighted from the SWAp partnership appertaining to the principles of the modality that revolve around power. The roles of ownership and leadership of the SWAp process that are expected to be shouldered by the aid recipient government have not been fulfilled due to exacerbation of the existing situation perpetrated through the power of those donating the money, and a lack of capacity on the part of the recipient government – epitomizing the power imbalance in a SWAp setup. In turn, such lack of capacity affects the ability of the recipient government to coordinate SWAp programmes (Smith, 2005; Samoff, 2004 and Murphy, 2005).

By role delineation, in addition to financial aid, donors/DPs are intended to bring expertise to the process, which also places them in an advantaged position of power compared to the recipient government. Consequently, they are able to influence the process to realize their interests, undermining partnership ideals (Samoff, 2004). According to the Paris Declaration framework donors/DPs are required to align aid with national plans and priorities. However, based on evidence from the literature review, this has rarely been accomplished due to the interference of donor priorities and interests.

The multi-faceted role of international assistance that aims to address challenges confronting the education sector and simultaneously achieve global targets further

presents a complexity in the provision of aid in a SWAp partnership by attracting a set of conditionalities on the part of the donors (Samoff, 1999).

Based on the experiences of the implementation of the modality elsewhere and a critical reflection on the general principles of its partnerships, all the aforementioned issues surrounding SWAp collaboration serve to underscore the crucial role that power has in the outcomes of education programmes implemented under this new aid initiative.

Therefore, the notion of power derived from my literature review is that donors have power and this is why they are able to interact at the global level at which they make important decisions – some of which have led to changes in North–South relations and a move away from the project approach to the SWAp (Forster, 1999). These innovations have also linked aid to international poverty reduction targets in line with neo-liberal economic policies, EFA and the MDGs (King and Rose, 2005).

Nevertheless, my intention in this section is not to review the literature on power so much as to establish some key theories that will enable me to analyse and explain more clearly the education SWAp process in Malawi. The following theories are discussed with a view to realizing this objective.

Weber's Distributive Theory: Weber's (1978) position on power is founded on his understanding of and orientation to social relationships, with the focus on a bilateral arrangement. In the distributive power conceptualization, one party in a social relationship is regarded as having more control and is therefore in a position to impose his or her own will regardless of the other's wishes. Therefore, this theory assumes the pre-existence of such a relationship. When one party gains power, the other begins to lose it, a process that proceeds along a continuum. This theory also holds that it is possible for either of the two parties in the relationship to assume control in the first place (Heiskala, 2001).

Parsons' Collective Theory: Parsons (1960) hypothesizes that power extends beyond Weber's model in arguing that it might be amassed by two parties who can then agree to cooperate and wield their combined power over a third party or more actors. Therefore,

power has both collective and distributive functions (Parsons, 1960; Heiskala, 2001). Parsons indicates that power can be used in such a fashion as a resource. However, both Parsons (1960) and Weber (cited in Heiskala, 2001) regard power as being external to any particular actor.

Foucault's Discursive Power (Foucault, 1991): This conceptualization focuses on how power is created and how it is promoted through different levels. It operates in the form of networks of relationships, the identity of actors/parties being dependent on the state of the network (referred to as the "climate" of the relationship). Such a powerbase might originate with a mother or child in a family network; or, as is the case with the present study, a DP or recipient government, the network being confined to the SWAp partnership.

Foucault (1991) views power as neutral in terms of the identities of and its actors and relations between them. Based on the literature review, power manifested in macro-level encounters between DPs and recipient governments may be viewed in terms of tactical episodes bound together by strategic operations. Therefore, some difference in approach notwithstanding, a structural view of power may be perceived not only as an 'a'–'b' relationship in which 'a' exercises power over 'b', but also one that is internal, each party's identity being dependent on the other (Foucault, 1991; Heiskala, 2001).

Such a conceptualization differs from the distributive or collective approaches to power discussed earlier in this section in which the identity of 'a' is independent of 'b' in their relationship. On the contrary, this approach does not centre on 'a' or 'b' the parties themselves but on the relationship connecting the two, which introduces a power mechanism. In this arrangement, neither party can have complete power over the other. One can have an upper hand, but each has some power, for example, a guard and prisoner relationship (Foucault, 1991; Heiskala, 2001), but as is the case with the present study, a DP and recipient government. The key issue is the mechanism; when this changes or a new factor emerges such as an innovative policy direction – e.g. the Paris Declaration, which might bring a significant change in international development cooperation – it threatens to undo the power of those involved in the relationship.

Thus, according to Foucault (1991), power is proportional to action, is modified by events, and does not end with 'a' exercising will over 'b'. Rather, 'b' has the capacity to accept or define the relationship such that its resistance becomes deviance and changes the nature of the association. Such deviation creates a new discourse that is manifested as micro politics (Heiskala, 2001; Foucault, 1991; Deacons, 2002).

According to Foucault (1991), the particular change branded deviance is an act of power if one considers who defines such deviance – those in power. Therefore, there is an imbalance and whatever discourse emerges is never neutral (Denegri-Knott, 2004; Foucault, 1982). This is corroborated by Denegri-Knott (2004) who asserts that it is through discourse that disciplinary power generates the difference between what is accepted as the norm and what is deviant. On the other hand, Deacon (2004) highlights the emphasis Foucault (1991) places on discourse by suggesting that it is not necessary to define power, but, rather, to examine the means by which it is exercised and the consequences when individuals exert power over others. This notion is taken a step further in discouraging the 'separation of relations of power from and opposed to knowledge, truth and freedom' (Foucault, 1982, p.27). Thus, Foucault (1991) emphasizes the significance of inter-subjective acceptable knowledge of the way in which power is exercised and the links between knowledge and power. His conception of power as covert or latent indicates that it works *through* actors rather than on them.

Foucault (1991) further explains that belief systems gain power as more people embrace them as common knowledge. In this way, knowledge and truth instil a sense of self-discipline in individuals through the construction of knowledge and value sets that they use to help others to manage their affairs (Deacon, 2002; Foucault, 1982). An individual in possession of knowledge (e.g. a teacher in relation to his or her student, or a doctor and patient dynamic) assumes the responsibility of subjecting him or herself as well as others to such knowledge. Thus, a field of expertise is embraced by many people as they subject themselves to such a belief system that forms their identity through induction or training as common knowledge, which is utilized to govern others (Deacon, 2002; Foucault, Foucault, 1982; Rabinow, 1984). Accordingly, this process constitutes 'knowledge of the conscience and the ability to direct it' (Foucault, 1982, p.782). Knowledge and the notion of truth thus interact together. The exercise of this form of

power therefore thrives on the inner knowledge of the self and uses this to govern the individual.

Lukes' Radical View of Power: In this hypothesis, Lukes (2006) describes power as imposing internal constraints on others who in turn acquire a belief leading to their consent or adaptation to domination. Both coercive and non-coercive measures can be used. He indicates that power as a concept is value dependent, being linked to assumptions. Lukes presents three dimensions of power as follows:

First Dimension: Lukes (2006) believes that the exercise of power is intentional and active; and if there are opposing views, an individual holding power will defeat an opponent's preference: a pluralist viewpoint. The first dimension is concerned with behaviour, decision making, key issues that cause the difference, observable conflict, and subjective interests – which are regarded as policy preferences revealed by political participation. In other words, power is possessed by those who are able to get their way when decisions are made and operates to enable those decisions to be enacted.

Second Dimension: This dimension concerns decision making and control over the political agenda, issues and potential issues, observable conflict, and subjective interests – which are regarded as policy preferences or grievances. This addresses criticism of the pluralist viewpoint of the First Dimension, and holds that power decisions are not only concrete but are also affected by other factors. Decision making can also include non-controversial issues, for example, values and rituals. The main point is that power can be used to create or reinforce barriers during conflict; for example, decision making versus non-decision making, whereby decision making is viewed as change with a purpose – bringing in the alternative to that which already exists – and non-decision making represents choices that block alternative views or values. Essentially, non-decision making is intended to address potential issues that can bring in changes to mechanisms – as with Foucault – which threaten the usual mechanism (Lukes, 2006). The second dimension therefore includes power that is not seen just in observable behaviour but encompasses the power to exclude both alternatives possibilities and people and groups.

Third Dimension: This dimension concerns decision making and control over the political agenda, issues and potential issues, observable and latent conflict, and subjective and real interests. It is concerned with the power to prevent the formation of grievances (dealing with issues before they surface) by shaping perceptions, cognitions and preferences to ensure acceptance of a certain role. Latent conflict concerns a conflict of interests in 'a' with regard to the exercise of power, and the real interests of 'b', which are excluded when the latter is either unaware of them or does not express his or her interests (Lukes, 2006). The third dimension of power includes the hidden mechanisms by which conflict is not visible, but nonetheless enables the powerful to ensure the compliance of the less powerful.

Soft Power: Nye (2010): According to Nye (2010), unlike Lukes' (2006) three-dimensional view that revolves around shaping others' preferences by using both coercive and non-coercive means, soft power involves the latter only: you attract people through your capabilities and make them desire and strive to be like you.

China's growing power and influence on the international development arena has been widely recognized by the global community to the extent that Hyden (2008) is prompted to argue that, particularly where African countries are concerned, there is overt competition in aid provision between Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and China. This contention is corroborated by Suzuki (2010), who observes that the change in China's increasing influence in the international political arena is evidenced by its exercising of 'soft power' among its neighbours and developing countries in Africa – Malawi being one of them.

Heiskala's Neo-structuralist Theory: Heiskala's (2001) hypothesis expands on the aforementioned approaches. It contends that macro relations alone do not determine the starting point of micro relations. This conceptualization regards each relationship between 'a' and 'b' as a power relation regardless of there being an inherent or institutionalized strategy. It thus represents a move away from Foucault (1991) in refuting the neutrality of power. Accordingly, all relations are power relations, those concerning "dispositifs" falling under micro power relations, while class relations form

a discrete group of dispositifs. Therefore, power cannot be confined to any single instance but is spread throughout the entire network of relations.

According to neo-structuralist theory, manifestations of analytical power approaches do not need to be used as alternatives, but by placing them on a scale, analytical capacity is enhanced (Heiskala, 2001). For example, Weber could be at level 1: 'a' and 'b'; Parsons at level 2: 'a' and 'b', with combined power over c; Foucault at level 3, with 'a', 'b' or 'c' but with a power mechanism; and the neo-structuralist conceptualization at level 4, with different approaches on the scale rather than alternatives. As the area of application widens by moving up through the levels, the complexity of analysis also increases. These analytical power approaches therefore do not necessarily conflict with each other as previously argued, but can be used in a complementary way to form one unified concept – a neo-structuralist one (Heiskala, 2001).

In a SWAp partnership, everyone is implicated in the discourse, as all members strive to achieve their aims not only as actors from various backgrounds representing different interests and agendas, but also as individuals interacting in such a forum. In the case of the present study, changes in international development aid supported by those in power – the DPs – brought about a transition from the project approach to the SWAp after the former was branded ineffective. This was later reaffirmed by the Paris Declaration, which redefined the partnership model, again supported by those in power; thus, presenting another discourse within the mainstream international aid dialogue. In terms of roles and responsibilities, the DPs were assigned the function of not only providing funding, but also expertise – they were branded as knowledgeable by those in power.

Therefore, in accordance with the findings of my literature review, the conceptualization of power in this thesis adopts both Foucault's discursive theory in respect of the structural level and Lukes' dimensional hypothesis, paying particular attention to power dynamics in the SWAp partnership. Foucault's theory is adopted because power relations operate in discourses in which the actors become caught up – each one attempting to pursue his or her respective government's interests to some extent, not only at the lower structural level of a SWAp implementation, but also at a higher stratum where decisions on international development aid (as a power

mechanism) are taken, such as those encapsulated in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.

Again, based on the literature review, I note that there are certain constraints on actors in terms of the representation of their views on important decisions made in a SWAp process (Samoff, 2004). Therefore, another dimension that my conceptualization utilizes derives from Lukes' notion of power, which principally concerns actors' possession of power and its exercise over others; people striving to have their will and interests represented in the SWAp decision-making process; and the manner in which the powerful secure the willing compliance of those they dominate by imposing internal constraints on them through coercive and non-coercive measures.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the trends in international development cooperation that led to the introduction of the SWAp, a modality that is associated with effective aid delivery. It has linked international aid to development theories that continue to influence the provision of assistance to the South. It has also shown through experiences of SWAps in other developing countries that clear principles determining the SWAp notwithstanding, the implementation of the modality remains problematic.

These challenges have risen due to issues of aid dependency, capacity, coordination and ownership in the context of the Paris Declaration framework; international development assistance that has tied aid to conditionalities and targets; and the effects of neo-liberal economic principles that continue to impede the effective implementation of the SWAp and its partnership interactions. These concerns further exemplify the gap between the rhetoric around the SWAp and the reality on the ground.

Finally, the chapter has discussed various issues that make power a crucial determining factor in programme outcomes; given that the SWAp partnership is not only a social entity that is prone to power relations, but that the very introduction of the modality was an act of power in the realm of international development aid.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology for investigating the nature of the Malawian education SWAp partnership and its influence on this process by exploring the various actors' perspectives. It provides the purpose of the study, and the research questions. It also explains the research rationale and reason for choosing a constructivist paradigm, and the ethical considerations. The chapter defines the research approach and the reason for deciding to use mixed methods, and then presents the ontological and epistemological considerations in this study. The chapter also describes the sampling and methods of data collection and analysis, and the reasons for selecting them. It explains the delimitations and limitations of the study and presents the research strategy. The conclusion is drawn from the key methodological considerations highlighted in the chapter.

4.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Malawian education SWAp partnership and how it influenced the SWAp process. This became necessary after a literature review (see Chapter 3) highlighted contextual knowledge on a wide array of issues around SWAp experiences in other contexts (Silverman, 2005; Flick, 2009). One of the key issues emerging from the literature review is Buchert's (2002) observation that partnerships are central to the effectiveness of a SWAp. Another significant issue is the emphasis on the importance of collaboration, as the SWAp is a critical partnership strategy adopted by international aid agencies for the funding of state sectors in developing countries. Yet, the literature also draws attention to a number of outstanding problematic concerns around how these partnerships ought to be conducted (Courtney, 2007) given that there have been such inconsistencies in the SWAps implemented

elsewhere. In the light of such findings, it was pertinent to focus the present study on partnerships in an examination of the perspectives of actors in the education SWAp process.

Therefore, the main research question for this study is:

How do stakeholders' perspectives on partnership influence the education SWAp process in Malawi – from the Policy Investment Framework to the National Education Sector Plan?

In order to answer the main research question, this study required the investigation of those involved in the education SWAp partnership, a variety of actors that covered DPs/donors, government officials, and CSOs/NGOs.

The following sub-questions were selected to understand the nature of the partnership and its influence on the SWAp process: 1) What motivated the emergence of the partnership in the education SWAp process? 2) How do the roles of different stakeholders in the partnership affect the education SWAp process? 3) What is the nature of the interactions among stakeholders in the SWAp partnership? 4) How does the partnership in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?

4.2 Research Philosophy

Owing to the nature of a study that focuses on understanding the structure of an education partnership, exploring the perspectives and opinions of its actors was a prerequisite to determining the effect the partnership has on the SWAp process. Accordingly, it was vital that I choose an appropriate philosophical framework to guide the study, since a philosophical worldview continues to influence the practice of research (Cresswell, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

Consequently, the study utilizes a social constructivist philosophical framework (frequently combined with interpretivism) to explore the views of DPs/donors, government officials, and CSOs/NGOs as actors in the education SWAp process

(Cresswell, 2003; Silverman, 2005). The central point of constructivism is that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed, and that reality, too, is socially constructed, and does not exist prior to its social invention (Jackson et al., 2005). This notion is similarly observed by Cresswell (2003, p.8):

Thus, constructivist researchers often address ‘processes’ of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognize that their own background shapes the interpretation, and they ‘position themselves’ in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences. The researcher’s intent, then, is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world.

The constructivist position in understanding the various actors’ perspectives on the process – right from the motivation for initiating the education SWAp partnership, to interactions amongst the actors, and their relationships with each other – is of particular significance in an effort to gain insight into the impact that the SWAp partnership had on the education SWAp process. The anticipation was that data collected from the field would assist in developing a pragmatic conceptual understanding of the partnership configuration and other theoretical explanations that would later be used in the data analysis.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

In conducting a study that requires collecting primary data, the observation of an ethical code is fundamental in order to ensure that no participant is put at risk, from the period of data collection through to the dissemination of the findings (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2003 and Dunne, et al., 2005). One way of ensuring that vital ethical issues were taken into account, was to have my research plans examined against University of Sussex recommendations, those in force at the time of the commencement of the study being the Sussex Institute Ethical Guidelines, as reproduced in Appendix E.

This study entailed addressing sensitive and potentially confidential issues. It was therefore essential that I observe ethical considerations in my involvement and

interaction with respondents throughout the data collection period, thus ensuring that they were afforded due respect. Moreover, confidentiality and the protection of individual participants in this study were assured through the assignment of codes to each respondent and his or her organization (Bryman, 2004).

Although I made a written document seeking permission to have respondents participate in this study readily available, it was not used after I had explained its aim and the relevant authorities made it clear that there was no need for a formal request. They did this because they found the research topic to be of interest, especially given that it might provide insights into how to improve the SWAp partnership; and they also knew and trusted me as one who had interacted with them before. Some of them further indicated that they looked forward to reading the research findings. Since all the respondents were familiar to me, arranging interviews was straightforward and conducted by telephone.

At the beginning of interviews, it was necessary to provide information on the aim of the study to the respondents. This was done and I made it clear that they were free to participate in the study or decline. They all chose to participate and were keen to share their views on the SWAp process. They also readily agreed to have their interviews tape-recorded. Thus, upon receiving oral consent from the authorities (Bryman, 2004), I proceeded to administer the survey and conduct the interviews.

Again, I initially planned to ask respondents to sign a consent form prior to their involvement in the study in order to ensure that their rights were protected (Cresswell, 2003), but this was rendered unnecessary as we proceeded on trust. Nevertheless, ethical issues were carefully taken into consideration at each stage. I made it clear that all participants were free to seek clarification on any issue during interviews, which were conducted at respondents' offices or another location of their choice and at a time that was convenient to them.

4.4 Research Approach

As observed in Section 4.2 above, the nature of the study – and the research questions in particular – largely determined my choice of methodological tool (Tashakkori and

Teddlie, 1998; Flick, 2009; Silverman, 2005; Cresswell, 2003). The nature of this study entails the gaining of an understanding of the meaning and interpretations of the respondents' social world in which they interact as partners in the education SWAp process, 'and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives' (Cresswell, 2009; Dunne, et al., 2005). This also requires exploring numeric descriptions that may call for both qualitative and quantitative data (Bryman, 1988; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Cresswell, 2009; Miles and Huberman, 1984). An examination of the perceptions of actors requires in the main the collection of qualitative data that is amenable to the complexity of the study, hence the choice of the social constructivist position (Cresswell, 2009). However, quantitative data – which is often associated with the deductive style, focusing as it does on statistical data (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009) – was also used to provide information on the extent to which actors considered partnership relations to affect the education SWAp process; in terms of funding in particular, an area that this collaboration was expected to address.

Accordingly, I opted for a combination of research methods. As pointed out above, the decision to opt for mixed methods was based on the nature of the research problem, as 'certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches' (Cresswell, 2003, p.21). This guided the move towards adopting a more qualitative than quantitative approach in the mix in order to derive rich data that would help explore issues in great detail and help understand the meanings and interpretations of the education SWAp partnership (Bryman, 1988; Cresswell, 2009).

Another important factor that influenced my choice of mixed methods was the realization that all approaches have their biases and limitations; therefore, a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis helps utilize the strengths of both and offsets the weaknesses inherent in any particular technique. Moreover, different sources of data allow variation in respect of interpretation and understanding, thus achieving superior results (Cresswell, 2009; Jick, 1979; Bryman, 2004; Greene et al., 1989). A rich variety of data collected both objectively and subjectively may be used to advantage thus: 'If one allows the researcher to use both qualitative and quantitative methodological tools, then this embrace of both the subjective and the objective points of view is inevitable' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, p.26). Therefore, no attempt was made to avoid or

eliminate the bias inherent in any one method, as each had its role in elucidating the respondents' understanding and interpretations as well as my own (Cresswell, 2003). Such a strategy would not be possible in a non-constructivist approach.

It was thus decided to collect data using both qualitative and quantitative tools. However, the qualitative method is particularly appropriate to the present study, being associated with an inductive model (Cresswell, 2009), and with research 'primarily working within the constructivist paradigm and principally interested in narrative data and analyses' (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p.4). The focus is on understanding how social actors construct knowledge and interpret the world, which is influenced by their background, culture and their interactions with others; and so the knowledge derived from the data is not objective but subjectively constructed. The qualitative method of data collection involves greater engagement with respondents when, for example, it takes the form of the semi-structured interview.

While a combination of approaches with elements of both qualitative and quantitative methods has limitations in terms of the length of time involved in collecting and analyzing the data, another reason for adopting this strategy is its ability to generate multiple datasets and thus triangulation between them (Cresswell, 2003; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Bryman, 2004); therefore, providing an opportunity to gain the best possible understanding of the issues under study (Cresswell, 2009). Accordingly, I was able to integrate quantitative data into my qualitative dataset for a comprehensive analysis of the nature of partnership interactions and collaborations, and how funding to the education sector is affected in the SWAp process.

Data were collected using the concurrent procedure – both quantitative and qualitative information is collected 'at the same time and analysed in a complementary manner' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998, p.47) – and the subsequent analysis focused on common areas of agreement or disagreement between them. The concurrent procedure was preferred to the sequential one – in which the researcher first conducts a phase using one method followed by another phase using a different method (Cresswell, 2009; Greene et al., 1989) – because it was anticipated that doing so would reduce the amount of time required for data collection. This strategy was also adopted in the knowledge

that the mixed methods approach entails the collection of at least two different datasets, which in itself is a lengthy process.

4.5 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

As indicated earlier, the predominant method in this study is a qualitative one that employs inductive techniques. Ontology refers to the nature of reality, which, according to the positivist paradigm, is believed to be singular and stable. On the contrary, from the viewpoint of the constructivist (also referred to as naturalist or interpretivist), reality is multiple, emergent and constructed – hence subjective (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Bryman, 1988). Thus, what is described as reality is the result of actors restructuring, shifting and constructing their social world through interaction with others based on background, culture, systems and subjective experience.

The ontological stance of this study is based on the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, which underpins its qualitative methodology in the understanding that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998.; Bryman, 1988). With reference to the specific context of the study, the reality of the nature of the education SWAp partnership was constructed around the meanings and interpretations DPs, government officials, and civil society derived from their interactions in the process. Although they had substantial liberty to act based on their understanding of the environment in which they found themselves, they were limited in the ability to change their situations in respect of the SWAp process, as they were bound by the prescriptions of international aid at a higher level.

However, the rationale for SWAps lies in the notion of development whose ontology is often considered unproblematic. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider participants' understandings of development from this perspective. However, purely from an empirical point of view in Malawi, the idea of linear development is not easily accepted, given the country's heavy dependence on aid, but also due to cyclical nature of disasters like flooding and persistent droughts, food insecurity, malnutrition, high incidents of malaria, HIV and AIDS, poverty and other factors which tend to affect development in the country including that of children (Malawi Multiple Indicator

Cluster Survey, 2006; Sharra, 2010). Aid flow has not been consistent and yet most development activities are dependent on it, such that any aid received is viewed as better than none. Aid and other factors tend to affect development at various stages and different periods to the extent that linear development sounds to be a too simplistic approach to Malawi. Thus cyclical development is what Malawians have known and experienced. Consequently, the views and perceptions of respondents about the reality of the education SWAp partnership were also likely to be influenced by this background and experience.

Epistemology refers to what is taken as accepted knowledge, and the relation between the knower and the known. According to the constructivist paradigm, it is believed that the knower and the known cannot be separated, and that there is a relation between knowledge and reality (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Bryman, 1988).

With regard to this study, attention was paid to its design, data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of results in order to draw meaning from DP, government and civil society views/perspectives, both as a comparison with my own understanding and in parallel with it as we interacted (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). This underscores the subjective stance I adopted in this study. Knowledge about the education SWAp that was learned from the actors was based on an interpretation of interactive experiences that were shaped by their culture, and historical and social perspectives (Cresswell, 2009). Consequently, there was a relation between this constructed knowledge and reality in the education SWAp process.

Although the objective standpoint of positivism believes that meaning exists in the world, that the knower and the known are independent, and hence knowledge reflects reality (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998), overall, very little attention was paid to this viewpoint by the present study.

4.6 The Researcher's Positionality

I was assigned the responsibility of participating in the Malawian education SWAp process as one who worked for a DP organization. Therefore, I had the opportunity to

join the SWAp partnership in late 2000 as one of the actors representing UNICEF, which was a full DP participant having worked with the government for many years. This naturally identifies me as an insider in the context of a study in which the participants were people I interacted with on a regular basis in the SWAp process. Even if one were to draw a clear partition between the two major actors in this partnership, that is, the government and its DPs, I would still be identified as an insider when interviewing both groups of actors. Thus, the positive aspects of an insider were enjoyed in both cases, which was a distinct advantage if one takes into consideration the division between the government and DPs in SWAp processes. Accordingly, I had privileged knowledge of the partnership, which I was able to exploit in order to help understand and interpret the situation (Gallais, 2003). Nevertheless, these details are provided merely to underscore my insider status as a researcher in this field of study.

As an insider researcher, many aspects that an outsider might have needed to take into account during data collection were not applicable to me, since ‘the insider researcher shares the social world of the research participants’ (Gallais, 2003, p.2). Thus, the dress, culture, traditions and customs of the participants were not alien to me. Consequently, gaining access to respondents was very easy even though they were members of the elite in their own way, but the risk of ‘taken-for-granted assumptions’ (Hockey, 1993, p.199 cited by Gallais, 2003) due to my social proximity to them (Ganga and Scott, 2006) remained high. Therefore, precautionary measures had to be taken. The choice of appropriate participants in this study was accomplished based on my knowledge of all those involved in the SWAp process.

Gallais (2003, p.3) further points out the dangers ‘that the insider researcher will approach situations with assumptions and preconceptions applicable to the home group.’ Therefore, I took steps to ensure that I did not make any premature judgements about participants’ responses when I had prior knowledge of a particular issue. I relied on the information provided, but requested further details and clarification on certain areas based on my knowledge and experience. This was done in an effort to avoid any bias on the part of either the participants or myself arising from overfamiliarity and taken-for-granted assumptions.

Generally, I enjoyed a good rapport with all the participants and, based on responses to the issue of power relations, I judge that some of the common barriers that insider researchers encounter were not prevalent in this study. Respondents were sufficiently candid and did not withhold information on those critical issues around participation in the SWAp process that tended to be affected by power relations emanating from DP funding to the government. My assessment of this is based on the knowledge and experience I have of this social group as an insider with access to present information, as well as that for the previous ten years. Indeed, my experiences and the meaning I derived from them were shaped by the very background and the environment in which I operated (Gallais, 2003).

4.7 Sampling

Given that the study was predominantly qualitative – although it also incorporated quantitative methods – I was prompted to opt for purposive sampling, which afforded me the best opportunity to target the groups of people who were involved in the education SWAp partnership. Such a procedure allows the selection of individuals, groups and settings based on their ability to meet certain characteristics relevant to the case under study (Wiersma, 1995; Silverman, 2005). Careful consideration is given to the parameters of the population the study covers when deciding on the sample (Silverman, 2005). Accordingly, a purposive sample was selected subjectively in a manner that was different from probability sampling (Bryman, 2004); a randomly selected sample being deemed inappropriate for this study. On the contrary, the purposive method helped me identify a research sample that included organizations and individuals selected by virtue of their involvement in the education sector SWAp. Again, personal involvement in the SWAp process rendered the selection process straightforward and more meaningful.

My sample population covered all DP/donor agencies actively involved in the education SWAp, the Government of Malawi (the Ministry of Education and other key departments), and CSOs and NGOs represented by the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE). Specifically, the study included a total of 40 participants, comprising education specialists from the following organizations:

Department for International Development (DFID); Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), now known as German Development Cooperation (GDC); World Bank (WB); United States Agency for International Development (USAID); African Development Bank (ADB); Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP); the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Planning, Basic Education, Secondary, Education Methods Advisory Services (EMAS), and DTED); the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Women and Child Development; and CSCQBE.

I planned to collect data through document reviews, qualitative interviews and participant observation. However, I was unable to conduct the latter due to my professional relocation to another country. It was thus virtually impossible to conduct participant observation on two counts: firstly, I was no longer part of the education SWAp process in Malawi; and secondly, even if I could have continued to participate, it would have been difficult for me to attend meetings because of the distance involved. Therefore, this aspect of data collection was omitted and the study proceeded by means of the other techniques, with interviews forming the major part of my data collection.

A total of 40 people participated in the survey, half of whom were interviewed. All survey forms were hand delivered and hand collected in order to avoid the non-return of questionnaires. This process proved to be beneficial, as I not only had the opportunity to further clarify the aim of the study when delivering the questionnaires but was also able to check whether all the questions had been answered when I collected them.

A review of documents relevant to the area of study was conducted. This included reports on capacity gap analysis for the implementation of the NESP; fiduciary assessment; documents that comprised the application for FTI funding; sector performance reports; and other documents pertinent to education reform. This review contributed to the study by providing a broader perspective and up-to-date information that contributed towards the identification of other emerging key issues subsequently incorporated in the research process. Another significant dataset collected was a trend analysis of funding patterns since the initiation of the SWAp process, which entailed

checking through relevant financial documents for the decade 2000–2010 in order to ascertain each DP’s funding trend. This provided data that was used to verify whether the SWAp partnership had helped to enhance funding to the sector. Data collected through the document review were used in triangulation not only to cross-check the accuracy of information collected through the survey and interviews, but also to ascertain whether there had been an improvement in sector performance.

4.8 Data Collection Methodology

This study, which mainly involved collecting qualitative data through interviews, gave me the opportunity to capture the perspectives and interpretations of DPs, government officials, and CSOs and NGOs operating in partnership in the education SWAp process. Interview questions were sufficiently broad to elicit a variety of responses that allowed participants to construct the meaning of their partnership interactions through the discussion (Cresswell, 2003; Dunne, et al., 2005).

Interviews were conducted using a guide that had been carefully developed (see Appendix C). I chose a semi-structured format because of its ability to offer guidance on specified topics of interest to the study. Thus, after predetermined introductory questions, I was able to follow-up with enquiries outside the guide in order to seek clarification on specific issues. This made for an open-ended discursive interview that was particularly useful for obtaining further information and meaning on issues of power relations in the SWAp partnership (Bryman, 2004; Cresswell, 2003).

The interview guide was developed based on issues relevant to the research questions, and consequently covered the principle areas of motivation for the emergence of partnerships in the education SWAp process; the roles of different actors in the partnership; and power relations among these actors (see Appendix C for details). I then developed a set of questions under each area that guided the elicitation of more detailed information. After developing the semi-structured interview guide, I piloted my research tool on a few people to determine its appropriateness and effectiveness.

The results of the pilot revealed the need to clarify two points: what the education SWAp entailed; and the period of the SWAp process, given that actors had different perceptions of its development. The present study covered the period from the implementation of the PIF to that of the NESP, examining the collaborations that emerged, and investigating the interactions of stakeholders in the education SWAp partnership from 1999 to 2010. However, the term “education SWAp” created a certain level of misunderstanding among a few actors who were of the opinion that it referred strictly to a full operational SWAp. Others believed that the process was confined to the period of the NESP.

I thus found it necessary to clarify the composition of the education SWAp process when introducing the aim of the study before beginning an interview. I therefore implemented this elucidation at the pilot stage and the innovation proved to work. Consequently, there was no need to make any fundamental changes to the research tool, but merely modify it a little. Accordingly, this refinement became an essential part of my preamble at the beginning of each interview.

I then proceeded to make interview appointments with the participants over the telephone, as indicated earlier, allowing them to choose where they wanted to be interviewed. It emerged that virtually all of them preferred their offices. In only three cases were interviews conducted by skype, as the respondents were out of reach and chose to be interviewed that way. I drew up my list of appointments on the basis that one interview session would not take more than one hour, taking travelling time into account.

However, this schedule had to be constantly updated, as some interviews took longer than an hour. I did not stop respondents who talked for longer – in spite of the fact that qualitative study interviews have a tendency to generate large amounts of data, which might hinder effective analysis – since detail was viewed as necessary because it provides a contextual understanding of those being studied (Bryman, 2004).

The tape recorder was used with the consent of interviewees in order to capture their responses, which were later transcribed for data analysis purposes. I deliberately left the

machine running for a while after each interview – although on three occasions, the respondent reminded me to switch it off – in order to capture more information, as I found that some respondents opened up after we had formally concluded the session (Bryman, 2004). Indeed, one respondent provided insightful information at the end of an interview on why some DPs who donated large sums of money wanted to exercise control over it. This would not have been captured had the tape recorder been switched off immediately after the formal conclusion of our discussion. Although this contribution was not directly utilized in the analysis, it provided a different perspective from that of the usual response during interviews.

In most cases, interviewees were relaxed and eager to provide as much information as they could on the education SWAp partnership and how it affected the process – and did so with passion. Thus, gaining access to them as powerful people, which is normally a problem (Williams, 2012), was not an issue in my case due to proximity as a fellow DP. In two exceptional cases, the respondents became so emotionally engaged that I found it difficult to stop them, although the information they provided was rich and necessary, and formed part of the main data used in the analysis.

Although there were isolated instances when I was kept waiting beyond the appointed time and interviews were also interrupted once or twice when respondents had to take telephone calls from their superiors, such eventualities could not in any way be interpreted as an intended display of subtle power. Thus, this study was not troubled by any of the complex, problematic issues that can arise when interviewing members of the elite, as in many ways I shared equal identity, status and authority with the respondents, a fortuitous occurrence that facilitated a smooth exchange of information (Odendahl and Shaw, 2010).

In only one case did an interviewee keep reiterating the same point in response to almost every question. The participant repeatedly bemoaned the fact that the Ministry of Education had not revised the Education Act and felt that such an amendment was all that was needed to facilitate a smooth SWAp process. This line became so tedious that I was tempted to stop the respondent on several occasions. In an effort to deflect the interviewee from this refrain, I asked a probing question on the topic under

investigation, but this was not very successful, proving to be only a momentary diversion before the respondent was back on the same tack. Unsurprisingly, the data gathered from this interviewee provided little information that was relevant to the study.

In addition to the data I obtained from my first round of interviews, I found that one emerging issue required further investigation. As special attention had been given to a specific area in which the interviewees were personally involved (Flick, 2009), I arranged to re-interview two respondents who were required to reflect on the two situations pertaining to the issue. Data collected through this technique were also recorded and transcribed.

‘Questionnaires, which are mainly strongly associated with the production of quantitative data and statistical analysis’ (Dunne et al., 2005, p.41) were also used in this study to collect quantitative data to measure the extent to which the education SWAp process influenced funding to the sector. Since questionnaires are also useful in identifying underlying patterns, I collected quantitative data pertaining to aspects that covered various issues on how funding to the sector was affected by the SWAp process; partnership relations; the roles of stakeholders/actors; financing mechanisms; aid coordination; leadership; principles applied; and government priorities.

Specifically, self-completion questionnaires (see appendices A and B) were used in which respondents were expected to answer all questions individually (Bryman, 2004). The two questionnaires, which were basically the same and only differed slightly in terms of personal data, mostly contained closed questions with the exception of a few open ones at the beginning that elicited personal information.

I took into account the following considerations in designing the survey: the clarity of questions in order to avoid cases of non-completion; the ease with which respondents would be able to complete the questionnaire; and the use of closed questions that would render data analysis uncomplicated. Since the survey involved self-completion of questionnaires, it was essential that a covering letter accompany them (Wiersma, 1995) to stipulate the purpose and objectives of the study (Best and Kahn, 1986), and to assure

the respondents of their confidentiality. However, in practice, this was accomplished orally when hand delivering the questionnaires.

A date was set with all participants when I would return to collect the questionnaires, a precaution that was taken not only to provide them with a deadline, but also to circumvent the postal delays that can occur in developing countries in particular. The respondents were given adequate time to complete their questionnaires; nevertheless, there were a few cases in which I had to return more than once because some people gave several excuses for not completing them. In a few isolated cases, I had to sit and wait for hours in reception areas while questionnaires were finished.

4.9 Methods of Data Analysis

As indicated earlier, 20 respondents were interviewed through a qualitative inquiry using a semi-structured interview guide. The aim was to gather information on each interviewee's perspective on and knowledge about the education SWAp partnership as the basis for drawing out the meaning of the actor's construct about his or her social world (Flick 2009; Cresswell, 2009). The initial analysis process began with the transcription of the tape-recorded data, as 'qualitative research relies on understanding social realities through the interpretation of texts' (Flick, 2009, p.75).

One major challenge I encountered during the transcription process was spending long hours listening to tape recordings and typing up the text, particularly in cases where the recording was poor, which meant rewinding several times to ensure that I had captured it accurately. However, this process accorded me an opportunity to familiarize myself with the data. As I personally transcribed all the recordings, it was easier to identify emerging themes well in advance of the coding, which would not have been the case if somebody else had transcribed the data for me. I was also able to relate these themes to those that had been identified during the literature review. Another significant opportunity the transcription process presented was my ability to establish with ease the core datasets that I would use in my main analysis, and the identification of those that presented new, emerging issues in the area of study which would require further research in the future (Flick, 2009).

Since this study was predominantly qualitative, analysis also followed a qualitative approach, data collected through the survey being used for triangulating information gathered through interviews. After careful consideration of the nature of my study, and the size of the sample and datasets, I opted for manual analysis rather than computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), which is expensive and time consuming to use (Bryman, 2004). This decision also took into account the fact that some critics claim that computer software tends to generate too much unnecessary detail, which could have made it difficult to obtain a rational analysis, particularly given the size of my sample.

The transcripts of the tape-recorded data were coded by allocating labels according to the emerging concepts, themes and theories of the social world of those under study (Cresswell, 2003; Bryman, 2004). This approach is consistent with Flick (2009, p.306) in that, 'Coding the material has the aim of categorizing and/or theory development.' I also paid attention to avoiding the common pitfalls of coding, and ensured that the context and coherence of responses were maintained during the process by applying recommended steps and considerations (Bryman, 2004).

Four major issues were identified that formed the core of the analysis: 1) the emergence of the partnership, 2) personal relationships, 3) power relations, and 4) funding. Data organized according to various themes were then grouped according to each of these main issues. Limited episodic data on one aspect meant that further clarification was necessary in order to determine the impact of the role funding; that is, the effect that DP allocation of funds to the government had on both the interaction of actors in the education SWAp process and the operations of the government was incorporated into the analysis from interview data.

This analytical approach in turn provided useful and relevant information for the analysis of actors' knowledge about the SWAp; relationship interactions and the role of each group of actors; power relations; and the influence that this partnership had on the SWAp process. The results of the analysis (see Chapter 5) highlight how knowledge of a SWAp affects the participation of actors; how power relations affect participation and

performance in the SWAp process; and how the delivery and utilization of funding to the sector affects this process. The analysis also sheds light on the basis of power and how it was exercised in this partnership.

For the quantitative data, I used the sophisticated computer software application Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for my data analysis. These data were analysed through descriptive statistics and frequency tables. The results show that although funding to the sector has increased, it is affected by several other factors. The trend analysis data provided information on the pattern of funding to the sector by each DP, and this helped in the cross-checking of information on funding collected through the survey (Jick, 1979). Overall, the quantitative data was used to triangulate and enhance the findings of the qualitative data, but also added to the credibility and validity of the study (Jick, 1979).

After generating tables of percentage scores based on a Likert scale that had three positives, one negative and one neutral, it was found that it was necessary to compress five categories into three – one positive, one negative and one neutral – in order to realize a clearer picture of the responses. Therefore, this was accomplished without tampering with the data collected in the field.

4.10 Delimitation and Limitations

Being specific to a particular group of people, the study confined itself to investigating the actors in the education SWAp process mainly through interviews and a survey. Nevertheless, one major limitation was a lack of funding to engage research assistants to help collect data quickly in a short space of time. As data were to be collected in Malawi, I could not achieve this by myself whilst working away from home in another country. However, this was turned to my advantage, since the data collection period was consequently prolonged in order to allow me to return at convenient times during holidays. This facilitated the collection of data that covered different phases of the education SWAp process, and hence presents a better picture of the interactions of the actors and their influences at various stages.

Another limitation (subsequent to the first point under delimitation) was that the study was confined to a small sample of key stakeholders actively involved in the education SWAp process. This became problematic during data collection as, in the absence of those who were actively engaged in the process, in some isolated cases, it was difficult to obtain relevant information from those who were relatively newly employed or only partially involved.

In addition to the above observations, such a limited purposive sampling derivation has implications for the generalizability of the study findings, given that the sample might not be reasonably representative of the broader population (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Bryman, 2004; Bryman, 1988; Cresswell, 2003; Flick, 2009). Nevertheless, the study findings may be regarded as generalizable to the overall Malawian context, as they represent a case study of the actual education SWAp process that adequately and appropriately covered the interactions in the partnership of all those involved in the process. Although the results cannot be extrapolated to an international context, the insightful knowledge and lessons generated from the study could be utilized profitably in other SWAps in Malawi, including the implementation of a full SWAp in the education sector and beyond.

4.11 Research Strategy

My strategy for this study was that I should collect the data personally, as I could not afford to employ any research assistants. I determined that a period of one year was required for the fieldwork, which covered document analysis, the conducting of interviews, the administration of surveys, and participant observation (the latter of which was dropped, as indicated in Section 4.8).

Preparatory work began with the development of research tools in 2008. Fieldwork on data collection began in January 2009, which entailed lengthy international and local journeys to research sites in Malawi, mainly in Lilongwe – where the key participants were based – but also outside the capital. There were no financial resources to support my travel, accommodation, or stationery and recording equipment expenses, which I was thus obliged to bear myself.

Appendix F provides the fieldwork schedule, which indicates the timing of its various stages taking into account the modifications made after dropping the participant observation element and the delay due to the late approval of my proposal.

4.12 Conclusion

The methodology used in this study has facilitated an understanding of actors' perspectives on how partnership interactions affected the education SWAp process. This chapter has described the aim of the study and the research question. It has also explained the research philosophy, the basis for deciding on a constructivist paradigm due to the nature of the study question, and highlighted the ethical considerations.

The chapter has defined the research approach and the reason for the selection of mixed methods. This decision was based on the research problem and the realization of biases and limitations inherent in all methods. Therefore, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods was instrumental in collecting and analysing data that provided accuracy through triangulation and confirmation of the validity of the findings. It may be reasonably argued that the study managed to generate appropriate qualitative data that shed light on how partnership interactions affected the SWAp process; and the quantitative data provided insights into the extent to which funding was affected by various aspects of actor's interactions in the partnership.

This chapter has presented the relevant ontological and epistemological considerations, and their implications for the study; clarified the researcher's positionality; and outlined how challenges faced by an insider researcher were addressed.

The chapter has also described the sampling used, the research methods for data collection and analysis, and the reasons for their selection – which were basically due to the nature of the study. A purposive sample ensured that appropriate people participated in the study. The different datasets collected were cross-referenced for coherence.

The chapter has explained the delimitation and limitations of this study. The findings may only be generalized in the context of the Malawian education SWAp process, but lessons learned from the study could be useful in other SWAps both in Malawi and internationally. Finally, the chapter has highlighted the main strategy adopted and the fieldwork time frame. The next chapter presents a detailed analysis of the findings of this study based on data collected from all the methods employed.

Chapter 5

Towards a Sector Wide Approach

5.0 Introduction

The education sector in Malawi has undergone significant policy reform in the past two decades in an attempt to achieve alignment with the demands of international development aid trends. As part of the reform, Malawi's initial attempt to shift towards a sector wide approach was made around the development of the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) in 1999, which incorporated the international commitments in education to which Malawi was a signatory, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action (Policy and Investment Framework, 1999). The PIF was also viewed as a step towards developing a long-term development strategy for the education sector. As such, it provided an opportunity for the government to re-examine its 1995–2005 education strategy in order to give clear direction for policy priorities and reforms in the sector (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 1999).

It was therefore during the development of the PIF that relations were formed whereby development partners (DPs), civil society organisations (CSOs)/non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and Malawian Government officials began to work closely together in thematic groups, holding regular discussions on education. This period also marked a conceptual shift from “donors” to “development partners”, as the latter implies equality in the relationship, as expressed by one actor:

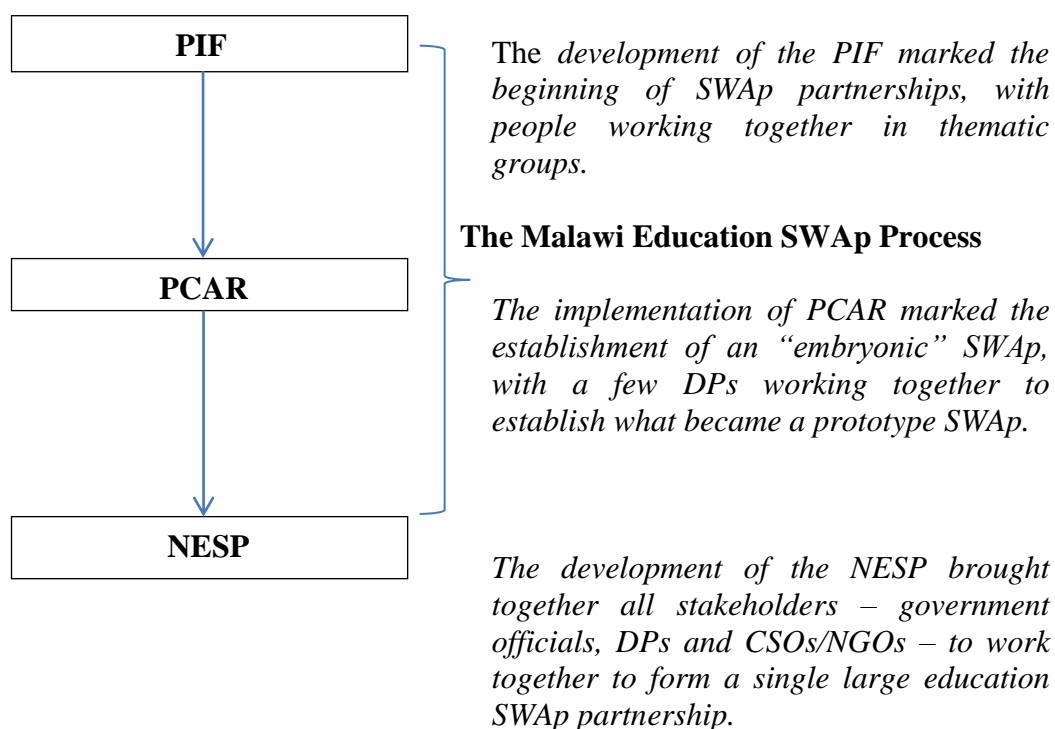
Development partners' is about respecting each other; everybody has a contribution to make. In government systems of the West, ownership ideals are promoted, hence partnership – each partner has a contribution to make (DPI, Jan. 09).

However, SWAp partnership attempts during the development of the PIF suffered from the effects of the project approach that was strongly prevalent among DPs at the time – as will be demonstrated later in this chapter.

Another major reform process was the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR), which was initiated as a project in 2001, but was later incorporated into the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) where it came to be seen as an improved partnership arrangement in the form of an “embryonic” SWAp. Several DPs including Department for International Development (DFID), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) among others teamed up to jointly support the implementation of PCAR (PCAR Risk Assessment for the Supply Chain of Standards 2 and 6, 2007).

From this prototype or “embryonic” SWAp around the PCAR, education partners began working closely on the development of the NESP. Therefore, the development of the NESP from 2004 became a widely recognized landmark reform, which is distinguished as the main SWAp document (see figure 5.1) that operationalized education policy aims and translated priorities into objectives, strategies, and financing for education (Foster, 2007; Brown et al., 2007). Accordingly, the NESP is associated with signs of a meaningful education SWAp partnership that evolved from the implementation of the new PCAR.

The following diagram explains how the education SWAp evolved in Malawi.

Figure 5.1: The Evolvment of the Education SWAp Partnership

Therefore, the questions of what constituted the Malawian education SWAp and how long it took to evolve into its mature form were not entirely clear, and were perceived differently by different actors.

Generally, the literature suggests that SWAps emerged when changes in international interventions linked global poverty reduction targets, MDGs and increased international aid to developing countries to the primary education goals of the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) in 2000 (King, 1992; King and Buchert, 1999; Buchert, 2002; Walt et al., 1999; Colclough, 2005; Virtue, 2005; Smith, 2005; King and Rose, 2005). At that same time, change was occurring in the South. This was also the case in Malawi. Following the 1990 Jomtien and 2000 Dakar World Education Forums, Malawi embarked on partnerships for education reform, moving away from the traditional project approach towards a SWAp, a process that started partnership for the development of the PIF. The latter signified the first step towards a long-term development strategy for the education sector, a document designed to provide a clear direction for policy priorities and reforms in the sector. Since a SWAp is fundamentally about forming partnerships in support of a sector, such a relationship is viewed as central to the success of the approach, as observed by Buchert (2002).

This chapter therefore presents data on the perspectives of various aid actors – DPs, government officials and civil society – in the education SWAp partnership in order to analyse and understand the SWAp process in Malawi, particularly by following the emergence of partnership and the linking of a SWAp to international aid and its targets, and enhancing coordination and harmonization.

Utilising a mixed methods approach, data were collected from development partners, civil society and government officials through interviews that focused on three main issues: 1) the emergence of the education SWAp partnership; 2) the role of stakeholders in the education SWAp partnership; and 3) power relations. Data on a fourth issue, the education SWAp partnership and its influence on the funding of the sector, were collected through a survey. These four issues also form the four sections of this chapter.

Development partners interviewed were primarily education advisors/specialists representing donor/aid agency organizations working in the education sector in Malawi. These individuals represented the ideology and interests of their respective aid agency organizations, being responsible and accountable for the implementation of the education programme activities that aid agencies supported.

Government officials interviewed principally comprised the directors of all departments of the Ministry of Education – including the Directorate of Planning – who were responsible for overseeing a variety of policies; as well as those of the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, who were responsible for government policy and planning. These individuals were also responsible and accountable for policy development and planning, and the implementation of the education programmes under their jurisdiction.

Civil society members interviewed were key post-holders with member organizations of the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE). This body brought together all NGOs working in the education sector in Malawi. These individuals were not only responsible and accountable to the constituents in the civil society circle they represented, but also to the donors/aid agencies that funded them.

Interviewees are identified by affiliation, with a code and numerical designation to represent different individuals from the same institution and group, as follows:

Figure 5.2: Identification of Interviewees

Code	Identification
GOE	Government official from Ministry of Education
GOF	Government official from Ministry of Finance
GOC	Government official from Ministry of Women and Child Development
DP	Individual from a bilateral development partner agency
DPM	Individual from a multilateral development agency
CS	Individual from a civil society organization

5.1 Emergence of a Partnership – Linking the SWAp to International Aid and its Targets

This section investigates in detail the varying viewpoints of actors on the impetus behind the emergence of a partnership in the education SWAp process. The first part examines the motivation behind the inception of an education SWAp partnership, and provides an account of differences in knowledge about SWAp among education aid actors as reflected from their perspectives. The second part examines the perceptions of different actors as they relate to the purpose and necessity of the SWAp partnership to enhance the coordination and harmonization of the education sector; and highlights the role a SWAp plays in achieving some of the aims of an aid programme. The third part examines the perspectives of these actors in terms of the achievements of the education SWAp partnership to-date, and asserts that non-adherence to the SWAp or its partnership principles can restrict the attainment of desirable results. The last part concludes by analysing the different perceptions of all the actors and the effects of dominant the neo-liberalist ideology that gives prominence to macro and micro-

economic policy prescriptions, and affects policy priorities (Rutkowski, 2007; Hinchliffe, 1993; Smith, 2005).

5.1.1 Linking the Education SWAp Partnership with International Aid and its Targets

This section examines the perspectives of various actors in terms of what influenced the emergence of an education SWAp partnership and the implications of these views for their participation in such a partnership. Current literature on the SWAp largely ascribes the policy to a desire to meet the objectives of international development aid and targets for the achievement of universal primary education (UPE) by 2015 (King and Rose, 2000). Several DPs were clear about this, equating the emergence of the education SWAp partnership in Malawi with trends in international development aid and the associated targets. This view may be attributed to the fact that their organizations were in part the architects of the SWAp and thus had a concomitant responsibility to ensure that it was implemented. As one DP stated, *'we had to look at international developments in aid and this is what influenced government and development partners to come together and work together towards [a] sector wide approach'* (DPI, Jan. 09).

There was unanimity in respect of this linkage among DPs, who associated the emergence of an education SWAp with specific global forums that focused on international development aid and targets. This notion is noted elsewhere and more generally corroborated by King and Buchert (1999), Buchert (2002), Walt et al. (1999), and Colclough (2005). In their responses, DPs also demonstrated that they had knowledge of the origins of the SWAp, and that they represented the stances of the organizations they served, which were responsible for the emergence of the SWAp and promoted the shift towards its adoption. Another DP indicated that, *'This started with global influence – from Jomtien 1990 there has been more networking that has filtered to nations'* (DPM3, Jan. 09).

The association with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is yet another area in which DPs identified a linkage between a SWAp and international development aid targets. Hyden's (2008) description of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

as ‘a significant juncture in the history of development assistance and cooperation’ is relevant here, but actors in the Malawian context observed that there is a disparity between the readiness with which countries commit themselves to declarations and the ability they have to initiate the appropriate changes. Indeed, some DPs expressed the frustration they experienced in complying with the expectations of the declaration, as indicated by the following sentiment:

We have heard of A or B agreeing on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, but reform of the systems to respond to the good intentions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness takes too long. Therefore, we have the declarations which are signed at [a] higher level, the reforms take too long to be implemented, and this frustrates the people on the ground and vice versa (DP1, Jan. 09).

There is thus a need to match commitment to international declarations with timely appropriate action in order to avoid sending mixed messages.

Another DP also associated the emergence of an education SWAp partnership with international development aid and targets by highlighting the protocols of the Paris Declaration, stating, ‘...I can say it’s due to the international development agenda – the protocols; you have heard of Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness’ (DP2, June 10).

It is clear from DPs’ statements that they had a shared understanding of the SWAp. As will be explained later, arguably, this was viewed as one way of positioning themselves strategically – maintaining dominance and retaining a leadership role – so that they might participate effectively in the SWAp partnership their organizations valued and promoted; thus, ensuring that their interests and targets were met.

Samoff (2004) notes that the new aid terminology emphasizes partnership and SWAps, yet current research findings suggest there is more continuity than change from that of the project approach in aid relationships. Initial attempts at an education SWAp partnership designed around the development of the PIF suffered from the same effect. In Malawi, the education SWAp partnership was adversely affected because many DPs were still implementing their respective projects beyond the influence of the new approach.

Fully acknowledging the shortfall experienced in the partnership during the PIF process, one DP was quick to admit that, *‘The other challenge is that the implementation of [the] PIF was projectized... Development partners projectized the PIF; instead of complementing each other, we were focused on our projects’* (DP1, Jan. 09). DPs acknowledged the failure of the PIF process to live up to the expectations of the SWAp. This was also clearly observed among government officials, who associated the emergence of the education SWAp partnership with the implementation of the PCAR rather than the earlier PIF as will be noted later.

Nevertheless, one of the reasons given for continuing with the project approach during the implementation of the PIF was the lack of trust and systems that could ensure the protection of the DPs/donors’ money. Therefore, DPs maintained a system that ensured the safety of their money, as indicated by the following comment:

Development partners did not trust Malawi and viewed the country as not capable to handle their money. At that time, the corruption level went up and there was no accountability. Consequently, donors wanted to protect their money, so they used a system that could control their money, for example, projects (DP1, Jan. 09).

Issues of trust and accountability where DP funds are concerned become complicated because DPs are not willing to risk their money. It is therefore not surprising that there was no progress recorded in terms of the harmonization of donor activities during the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration due to issues around lack of confidence and trust in government systems. Unfortunately, this does not seem only to affect harmonization efforts but also alignment: *‘The real and perceived risks and relative weaknesses of country systems are serious obstacles to further progress with alignment’* (Wood et al., 2008).

Government systems constitute one of the elements of capacity development, which also includes the strengthening of skills and processes; and yet the overall implementation of a SWAp involves capacity building. If this is the case, and considering the critical role capacity development plays in the realisation of a SWAp process (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2002; Smith, 2005), the question is at what stage can the

development of government capacity begin? Moreover, it must particularly be taken into consideration that systems development cannot be accomplished overnight and that capacity in respect of the SWAp process has been observed as an area of concern elsewhere (Brown et al., 2001).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) definition, capacity development is ‘the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time’ (UNDP, 2008, p.2). A further elaboration states that:

This approach is premised on the fact that there are some capacities that exist in every context. It uses this existing base of capacities as its starting point and then supports national efforts to enhance and retain them. This is a process of transformation from the inside, based on nationally determined priorities, policies and desired results. It encompasses areas where new capacities have to be introduced and hence, the building of new capacity is also supported (UNDP, 2008, p.2).

Nevertheless, in the Malawian context, this seems to have been constrained to some extent due to the strong grip of DPs on their funds and the lack of trust. This is an area that requires continual assessment in order to ascertain the best chronological order for the implementation of a SWAp. Should capacity development precede any SWAp process, or should capacity development come at the beginning of the process? And what mechanisms should be put in place in a SWAp process to ensure that capacity development is achieved?

Generally, DPs linked the emergence of the education SWAp partnership with trends in international development aid and the accompanying targets, and it was obvious that they had sound knowledge of the approach. The responses of two officials from the Ministry of Finance, which played a central coordination role in the process, also linked the emergence of the education SWAp partnership to international development aid and targets. However, such findings differed from the perceptions of most government officials, those from the Ministry of Education in particular. Even in a case in which one of the latter related the motivation for the emergence of the education SWAp partnership to international trends, this still revealed an element of uncertainty, the official stating that:

As I see it myself, I think it is a kind of international trend that came to us; so, the development partners from other countries introduced the SWAp process. I would strongly believe that our country was introduced to the SWAp process and when the advantages were considered, I think that is when it was considered that we should go the SWAp way (GOE5, May 09).

Apart from pointing out the link to international development trends, this statement also implies that, in accordance with SWAp theory, its perceived advantages played a role in motivating the government to engage in this education sector partnership. Such an optimistic view can be challenging and problematic, as noted by Buchert (2002) in a comparative analysis of SWAp implementations in Ghana, Mozambique and Burkina Faso, which all yielded unsuccessful results owing to the gap between principles and practice. As pointed out in Chapter 3, Malawian government officials' way of looking at the education SWAp seems to confirm the state's blind faith in the approach that was expressed in the NESP during the time of development. Such a perception requires careful consideration of the factors that hinder the realization of the principles of a SWAp.

Currently, the Ministry of Finance – which coordinates all donors/aid agencies – encourages all government ministries to adopt a SWAp and plays a central role in the management of the policy on behalf of the government.

The views of officials from the Ministry of Finance echoed those of the DPs. The ministry officials linked the emergence of the education SWAp partnership to international development trends. Similar to the case with the DPs, this also indicates that at least this section of the government had some knowledge of the SWAp, which was probably acquired by these individuals as the result of their efforts to meet the requirements of the coordination role assigned to them by the ministry.

However, according to actors' responses, such knowledge does not seem to have been possessed by government officials who were key players in the SWAp of their line ministries – as is further explored in the next section – which posed a potential hindrance to their effective engagement in the SWAp process. One Ministry of Finance official made the following comment:

It was mainly due to international trends. You can see that they are more focused and, in recent times, even some donors who were outside the direct support are now coming into the direct budget support (GOF1, May 09).

5.1.2 Linking the Education Partnership with a “Mini” or “Embryonic” SWAp

Contrary to the views of the majority of DPs, most government officials’ who were key players in the education SWAp process attributed the impetus for the emergence of the education SWAp partnership to a “mini” or “embryonic” SWAp around the implementation of the new curriculum; and to a need to extend the SWAp experience initiated at this lower/project level to a much broader sectoral level. Many government officials agreed that the emergence of an education SWAp should be linked to an operational partnership around PCAR, but not the experience around PIF in which DPs focused on their own projects and little attention was paid to the broader picture of achieving a single common goal. One government official commented:

In actual fact, looking at the partnerships, one of the partnerships that we could talk of is one under implementation of the primary curriculum and assessment reform, which is currently being used as a mini SWAp for the education sector; which drew together partners, a few partners, as a pilot for the future SWAp for the education sector. As it were, much of the work that we are now doing in terms of the SWAp we are trying to base it on some of the lessons that we have learned from the PCAR process (GOE2, May 09).

This statement shows that government officials were more inward looking than not, due to limited knowledge of international development aid that linked it to international development targets (King and Rose, 2005). Their differing experiences in the two main reform processes (PIF and PCAR) contributed to the adoption of views on what a SWAp partnership should look like based on informed judgment. Another government official remarked:

The nature of partnership that looks like SWAp is like in [the] PCAR process; this is where we have seen a prototype of a SWAp. We have seen a number of partners coming together joining hands with government to fund the conceptualization and development of the primary curriculum and assessment. Basically, what we have seen as a workable SWAp this far is around the reformed curriculum (GOE3).

Apart from revealing a lack of knowledge about the origins of the SWAp – and, to some extent, its theoretical concepts – the common perspective of these government officials also supported consistent comparison between the PIF and PCAR processes, which led to an inclination to relate the PCAR process to a SWAp more than to the development of the PIF process. Although the process of developing PCAR was initiated strictly as a project, its implementation later adopted a different approach, with several DPs supporting the implementation of this one programme, thereby creating a SWAp environment. One government official made the following remarks about the emergence of the SWAp partnership:

In terms of the development of the PIF, not much, but what I have noted in the development of the NESP, there has been a deliberate attempt to try and forge a number of partnerships. For example, within the NESP, apart from those partners that are contributing towards the PCAR process, there have been also deliberate attempts to drop in new partners who have not been participating in the education sector before (GOE2, May 09).

Yet another government official also shared a similar view, commenting:

My initial experience that I could be talking about will be in relation to a primary school curriculum... So, with that, we realized that there was a mini SWAp established where we had USAID, we had GTZ, and we had DFIRD and CIDA coming in to assist with the development of the new curriculum where the planning phase started in 2001 (GOE7, May 09).

It is clear from the various perceptions of government officials that the majority of them could think of a SWAp only in terms of an embryonic arrangement. This raises concerns about their level of knowledge of the SWAp, and about the expectations of the government with regard to ownership of the policy and taking the lead in line with the Paris Declaration. The literature on the SWAp emphasizes the centrality of capacity for ownership, leadership, alignment, and effective implementation of education plans (Smith 2005; Brown et al., 2001, Wood et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2007). Did these officials have the competence and SWAp capacity base commensurate with the expected role government had to play according to the Paris Declaration? Could they engage and participate meaningfully in a SWAp partnership?

This concern is reflected in the views of one DP, who pointed out that, *'As projects are winding down, for example, on capacity, we look for opportunity to get government to develop capacity of government officers that will embrace the SWAp'* (DPI, Jan. 09). Could government officials develop to a stage at which they assumed responsibility for the SWAp partnership process as DP input is minimized, as pointed out by Smith (2005)?

Another standpoint that was generally shared among government officials and DPs – but also, to a large extent, civil society, as will be observed later, given that it initiated the education SWAp partnership – was on funding, but with each actor emphasizing different aspects. While the DPs point of view focused on achieving the mobilization and efficient utilization of funds according to international commitment, the preoccupation of government officials was for the SWAp partnership to assist the state to address funding gaps in the sector, which would in turn also assist the government to achieve international targets. On the other hand, civil society was more concerned with ensuring that funds realized through the partnership benefited the intended target groups.

The fact that all actors were concerned with funding tends to suggest the crucial role it played in this partnership; hence, the necessity of safeguarding against the common problem of it creating power relations that contradict the theoretical concepts of a SWAp. Three government officials independently declared that, *'All these were the deposits [results] of setting up a SWAp. It is mainly to fill the financial gap that is there, and also to assist the government [to] meet the targets that were set at international level, i.e. EFA and MDGs'* (GOE3, May 09).

Another official indicated that, *'The main purpose of partnerships is actually to reinforce funding'* (GOE4, May 09); and another stated that, *'We find that partnerships have developed because of inconsistencies that were there in the funding of activities for the ministry'* (GOE1, May 09).

The emphasis on funding was stronger amongst government officials than amongst other partners. Of particular importance here is the need to understand the Malawian

context, in which (in 2006/7) over percent of education sector budget non-salary expenditure was supported by international aid (Foster, 2007). Thus, the contribution of the education SWAp partnership process to improved funding to the sector became inevitable and crucial. It is therefore against this backdrop that government officials were more likely than not to express views that associated motivation for the emergence of the education SWAp partnership with enhanced funding to the sector.

Such a viewpoint could also have derived from both individual and organizational dependency on international aid to initiate ministry programme activities, but much more on an individual basis because performance was assessed based on how much each official accomplished. Ministry officials depended on donor/DP funds to implement programme activities under their responsibility in the same way that the government was dependent on donor/DP funds to run the ministry, particularly so because the government budget for the sector's programmes was minimal. Such dependency tended to place government officials in the vulnerable position of dependency on the economic power of DPs where decision-making was concerned, as will be discussed later. Therefore, the issue of funding in this SWAp process requires careful consideration on the part of all actors in the partnership in order to ensure that SWAp principles are upheld and negative effects minimized.

5.1.3 Consolidating the Role of New Actors

Another distinct actor in the education SWAp partnership is civil society. The perspectives of civil society on what influences the emergence of education SWAp partnerships show that it is conversant with international development trends and international development targets. Its viewpoint also reveals something about its new role as a non-state actor in global governance (Sending and Neumann, 2006) and the development arena within the context of neo-liberal economic policy prescriptions, which, according to Malhotra (n.d.), have shifted power to civil society and the market as major development actors as a counter to the state.

Malawian civil society highlighted areas it was concerned about within society pertaining to political change and governance in the country in 2000, time, which

prompted its inclusion in the education SWAp partnership. It played this role to its best ability to ensure that the partnership was organized according to democratic principles, as one civil society member demonstrated:

I think generally speaking, arriving from the international forum and the realisation of the push that has been there for EFA and other MDGs, it just became clear that governments, especially in developing countries, cannot make any significant strides if they are not assisted... I would rather say the international development partners had an influence in coming up with partnerships, for example, just as I have said, the moment we adopted democracy, the development partners had to make sure that style should change from top-bottom to bottom-up or a mix (CS2, May 09).

This civil society member's view revealed the hand played by international organizations in establishing and reinforcing the new role of this non-state actor:

There has been a very strong hand played by development partners [such] as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and these other bilateral partners like DFID and GTZ to ensure that whatever we are doing we are doing in a manner that demonstrates democratic principles (CS2, May 09).

These remarks were made in light of the prevailing situation in Malawi at that particular point in time. Prior to the innovations that were precipitated by international organizations within the context of global change in international development aid with its linkage to international development targets, the participation of civil society was not considered necessary and government perception of civil society in Malawi remained basically sceptical, just as was the case with Tanzania, as observed by Hyden (2008).

Another view from civil society identifies the general problem of lack of knowledge, on the part of government officials in particular, about how a SWAp should be conducted, which seems to impede them in assuming their rightful role in a SWAp set up, as indicated by the following remarks:

For instance, although there is much talk today about SWAp, many partners have inadequate understanding of how it ought to work. Even among government officials, who are supposed to take leadership in the SWAp processes, there is a feeling of lack of ownership and commitment... Even NGOs, who are believed to work with communities, have either little

understanding of the SWAp matters or do not have resources and capacity to sensitize the public on the policies relating to SWAp (CSI, May 09).

It is apparent from the various perspectives of the three main actors in the education SWAp process that there was a disparity in awareness about the nature of this partnership. In contrast to the perceptions of DPs and civil society, which were in line with what the literature has to say about the emergence of the SWAp as a new aid modality, the views of the majority of government officials – mainly those with the Ministry of Education – were not. These were the same people who were at the centre of the education SWAp partnership, and expected to assume leadership and ownership of the process – which, according to Smith (2005), depends very much on capacity. It is also clear from the viewpoints of civil society members that lack of capacity and knowledge about a SWAp on the part of government officials is very likely to impact negatively on the process. This might also affect other actors as they attempt to facilitate the process for those implementing SWAp programmes on the ground. Indeed, limited knowledge of the area in which one operates can restrict meaningful performance.

Differing perceptions about a SWAp notwithstanding, a common perception shared amongst all actors was the idea that it was a welcome aid modality to all and that the partnership seemed to exert a positive influence on the approach to education, as evidenced by their perceptions regarding achievements to date. Nevertheless, these actors were not blind to the shortfalls of the process, particularly in terms of the initial SWAp partnership around PIF. As far as these actors were concerned, this collaboration did not seem to amount to good SWAp practice because the lines on which the partnership were organised fell short of the principles of a SWAp. There was a gap between theory and practice, a point that emphasizes the need to adhere to concepts and principles when engaging in a SWAp partnership.

This confirms Buchert's (2002) argument about partnership and the notion that a SWAp assumes the role of lowest common denominator in terms of success in education development; thereby cautioning against agreement on the rhetoric without due consideration for the implementation of the underlying principles. With education funding tied to global targets; emphasis on ending global poverty through internationally driven targets; and education playing the central role (Foster, 2005), it is

imperative that all actors in the education SWAp partnership have sound knowledge and share the same level of understanding in order to perform effectively in the process. Consequently, this has implications for the minimum knowledge or capacity base required of the government if it is to participate meaningfully in a SWAp based on human resources theory. This is an area that requires further investigation.

5.2 Enhancing Coordination and Harmonization – What Do They Want to See?

5.2.1 Enhancing Coordination and Harmonization – DP Expectations

In expressing their views on the purpose of the education SWAp partnership, DPs acknowledged the importance of addressing sector priorities, coherence, coordination, and the problem of fragmentation – factors that form the basis of SWAp principles. Two DPs independently argued that *‘partnerships are necessary to ensure sector priorities are addressed and rid the sector of fragmented interventions’ (DPM4, June 09)*. Another stated that *‘the motivation really arose from the fact that the development partners in the education sector were very fragmented in terms of their support to the Education Sector’ (DPM5, May 09)*.

One area of concern identified was the need for coordination in the sector, a factor that the project approach failed to accomplish when international aid was provided according to donor or DP priorities and managed through parallel implementation structures – a finding corroborated by Foster (2007). The views of DPs repeatedly highlighted the need to achieve coordination and avoid an excessively high profile or “flag raising” while pursuing the common good. “Flag raising” is a concept associated with the project approach whereby each donor desires overt acknowledgement of its achievements exclusively in terms of its own intervention, which is used as an element of performance assessment (Schacter, 2001). One DP pointed out the importance of *‘the idea of aid harmonization and alignment; and trying to get government leadership; and trying all of us to be able to coordinate; and be able to see, plan together and not duplicate efforts; and try to make our resources work’ (DP2, June 10)*.

Emphasizing the need to work together and accord the government the opportunity to determine its priorities, another DP contended that, *‘The idea is to work together and avoid flag raising – the recipient country didn’t have much say, but now the recipient country has been given [the] opportunity to decide and plan for their own country’ (DP2, June 10).*

These views tend to reveal an aspect of certain expectations that the SWAp partnership is supposed to realize in line with the Paris Declaration, as pointed out by Hyden (2008); and that in promoting the maintenance of individual identity, as an aid modality, the SWAp offers a government the opportunity to determine its priorities as well as areas of concern. However, as argued by Wood et al. (2008), the issue of flag raising, which is compatible with individual identities and national efforts, should be avoided in a SWAp partnership. The implied expectation is that in a SWAp set up, these issues should be addressed.

One major challenge to such expectation is how to get DPs to minimize the power and influence they wield due to their control over funding, and allow the government to assume its rightful role in setting sector priorities according to the Paris Declaration framework. This was especially vital in terms of the Malawian education SWAp partnership, where DPs tended to continue their traditional *modus operandi*, as demonstrated by the following statement from one government official about the introduction of Life Skills Education as a subject that was not examinable due to DP influence:

[DPs] push a lot on Life Skills Education...[but] they would dictate this shouldn’t be examined. Our context is different: [if] you don’t examine a subject, that subject is not given any weight at all; but because it is a donor dictating, our priorities take second place. The same thing with policies; we can talk of community participation [but] what sort of community participation do we want? What we conceptualized and what we are operationalizing are at cross purposes (GO3E, May 09).

DPs seem to have the power to make the government bow to their demands at any time in order to get their funding – this is the problem of aid dependency, with its subsequent

top-down approach, which can negatively affect partnerships (Aerni, n.d.). Therefore, if the recipient country's expectations are to be met, all actors in the partnership must adhere to SWAp theoretical concepts and give the government the opportunity to assume leadership and ownership. It also calls for substantial change in *modus operandi* and discipline on the part of the DPs.

Such a view was unlikely to be expressed by anyone from the DP side as it was in their interests to maintain the status quo, but the fact that it came from the DP side shows that flag raising not only caused concern to the government, but also worried the DPs since it tended to undermine the efforts of other actors. Emphasizing the point that in a SWAp partnership there is no room for such one-upmanship, another DP commented on the contrary effect, which seems to be embedded in such an attitude, that the SWAp has on power relations: *'Flag raising is also a power relation and therefore some may view [the] SWAp as a threat to the flag raising issue'* (DP1, Jan. 09). This calls for a shift away from the individual high profiling that was prevalent among DPs in the project approach, towards the pursuit of a wider common goal that characterizes the SWAp process.

Another view that some DPs expressed was the need for the partnership to develop and establish a long-term vision. This observation notwithstanding, DPs were unanimous on the need to address fragmentation and achieve harmonization, coherence and coordination in the sector. However, these goals also require that all actors conform to a SWAp theory in order to accomplish them. It is anticipated that these views on what the education SWAp partnership process is expected to accomplish should be matched with appropriate action if the gap between theory and practice is to be bridged.

5.2.2 Enhancing Coordination and Harmonization – Expectations of the Government

Consistent with the DP perspective, the majority of views articulated by government officials also revealed an area of concern about the experiences of the project approach. They were therefore inclined to express the desire that the government assumed the role of setting sector priorities, and that all actors should achieve a common goal,

harmonization, effective utilization of resources, and benefit from synergies. Driven by a desire to see positive change emerge from the SWAp partnership, one government official stated that:

The main purpose of partnerships is to ensure that we subscribe to a common goal; once the ministry sets the agenda, the donor partners come in and work towards that particular agenda. The ministry has been following what a donor would want to do, which is the reverse of what should happen (GO1E, May 09).

Arguing that the project mode that did not take into consideration what each actor contributed to the sector and fell short of benefitting from what each actor achieved, another government official pointed out that:

One of the major goals for partnerships is to ensure that there is synergy in what the partners are doing because before organizations thought of partnering, there were lots of standalone interventions/projects which tended to pull the ministry in all sorts of directions (GO2E, May 09).

A similar viewpoint to that of the above government official also emphasizes maximization of available resources through close collaboration of actors in the sector in order to achieve that the fullest potential:

Certainly, these partnerships are necessary because if you are talking of making the best use of resources that are available – both financial and human resources – you have to come up with a common understanding of what you want to achieve for the education sector without necessarily pulling in different directions (GO2E, May 09).

The views of government officials emphasized the need to address fragmentation; realize coordination and harmonization in the sector, as defined in the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness (2005); and reverse the trend that had been observed in the project approach:

First of all, you want to pool resources so that the sector is not fragmented into projects, but rather as a programme, and that the development partners are not setting the pace or the priorities. It is the responsibility of the country to identify priorities and then, of course, maximize the utilization of those resources in funding the education sector (GO4E, May 09).

It thus seems that government officials' main concerns were to see the reverse of the project approach that had placed donor priorities above those of the recipient country, and – a view that was echoed by DPs – to rid the sector of fragmentation. However, recognizing the state's responsibility to set sector priorities, the government officials placed more emphasis on public leadership, and the utilization of financial and human resources.

Unfortunately, moving away completely from the project mode becomes problematic in a situation in which DPs have not yet attained the requisite level of trust in the recipient government, due to issues of accountability, as pointed out earlier. This has a tendency to affect funding to the sector, as expressed by one DP: *'For example, DPs say in year one, a certain percent should go to [the] government through the system. Look at the system: implement SWAp on [an] incremental basis as they begin to trust government systems; [the] government should be willing to ensure accountability'* (DP1, Jan. 09).

Based on knowledge of the SWAp, another DP conceded that it was necessary for the government to assume control and leadership, stating that, *'In a SWAp, government takes control and donors fund the programme, and use government systems'* (DP1, Jan. 09).

From such a situation, it may be seen that a SWAp process is affected by issues of trust, accountability, and the capacity of government systems/procedures to allow DPs to utilize them. Contrary to the notion of a SWAp based on the Paris Declaration that the government takes leadership of the process and DPs use state systems/procedures for the disbursement of funds, this is not easily achieved, as DPs continue to set conditionalities to be met before such an ideal scenario can be realised. One DP explained that such a notion implies *'...the biggest foundation for the future SWAp, i.e. the pool fund which satisfies the Paris Declaration, requirements of harmonization, alignment, and using government procedures; but on condition that government procedures are in place if they have not been in place'* (DP1, Jan. 09).

The literature on SWAp also alludes to the problematic nature of conditionality, as exemplified by Brown et al. (2001, p.21):

It is difficult to strike a balance between avoiding stop-go financing and maintaining a credible threat, especially where the dependence of sectors on donor finance is substantial. The advent of SWAp has seen some new approaches to enforcing conditionality: reintroducing earmarking and graduated sanctions by varying future commitment levels.

This aspect raises a similar question to the observation made earlier in Section 5.1.1 on the minimum capacity required for government officials to engage in a SWAp process. Similarly, the question here is one of the minimum acceptable institutional capacity for government systems or procedures to qualify for use by DPs in a SWAp set up, especially given the understanding that a SWAp process is about developing capacity (Smith, 2005; Brown et al., 2001). However, this poses the further question as to what should come first: should development of government systems/procedures begin before the initiation of a SWAp process in order that they may be utilized as soon as the policy becomes operational?

It was also clear from one viewpoint that DPs were reluctant to risk their money in using weak government systems/procedures, as hinted at in this statement: *'Most people are risk-averse as we move from project to SWAp mode, and there is need for risk mitigation strategy to make people comfortable'* (DP1, Jan. 09). Such a concern was evident among DPs, as pointed out by Brown et al. (2007). A typical example that illustrates these concerns and questions of capacity was provided by one DP when commenting on government procurement systems as they prepared to operationalize the education SWAp after Malawi had received Fast Track Initiative (FTI) funding.

The FTI was launched in order to support developing countries in accelerating their efforts towards achieving EFA goals, one of its conditionalities being an effective SWAp partnership (EFA-FTI Secretariat, 2011). The FTI issue was a high priority as Malawian actors developed the NESP given that a sound national plan that incorporated poverty reduction was also one of the prerequisites (Malawi Local Education Donor Group, 2009). One DP emphasized this aspect by indicating that FTI requirements forced the government and DPs to cooperate on the improvement of state structures and systems with regard to procurement in particular:

I dare to say, that the Ministry of Education has never known what it is all about. There were two to three teachers who had been doing the procurement and did not have a clue about procurement; and there has never been given proper training. ...they didn't know the difference between international competitive bidding and national competitive bidding (DP3, Oct. 10).

The need for government procurement systems to exploit the confidence of DPs to the extent that they will use them is emphasized in *Malawi Development Assistance Strategy 2006–2011* (2007). However, these observations seem to inadvertently confirm government concerns about inconsistencies between what DPs say at the planning stage and what they do at implementation level; and tend to reveal a capacity gap that needs to be addressed before a SWAp can be effectively implemented. The major question in relation to this shortfall is when does capacity become a real issue in the SWAp process, taking into consideration that this statement was made at the implementation stage of the SWAp/NESP?

The view that the state should set sector priorities – which also conforms to the Paris Declaration – is based on the premise that if the government sets the priorities, it is likely to utilize funds efficiently in the areas it has identified, as noted by Hyden (2008). Nevertheless, the extent to which this can be accomplished also depends largely on interactions between actors in this partnership in relation to the theoretical concepts of a SWAp.

5.2.3 Enhancing Coordination and Harmonization – The Watchdog Role of CSOs and NGOs

The perspectives of CSOs and NGOs with regard to the purpose of the education SWAp partnership were in the main similar to those of government officials and DPs. Nevertheless, there was a slight variation, with CSO views focusing more on certain aspects such as enhancing policy formulation and implementation, participation of partners, realizing ownership, accountability, coordination, and maximizing resources. Moreover, civil society envisaged itself as playing the key role of watchdog in this regard. The observation that these facets of a SWAp should be underpinned was made at the Dakar Conference, which adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, a protocol that aimed to achieve high quality education for all and a 50 percent increase in adult

literacy by 2015. However, little progress had been registered towards the achievement of EFA goals or the MDGS, as noted by one CSO member who had attended the conference:

They established that one major problem was that governments were not accountable and they were not transparent. And then they said it is important – as another principle of democracy – it is important that we should create a watchdog which is non-governmental to make sure that it is taking governments to task, look at the plans they make, what targets they set, and to make sure that governments are on target with their plans (CS2, May 09).

However, the role of such non-state actors was determined at the beginning of the period of economic neo-liberalism, the so-called Washington Consensus era. During this period, with the World Bank concentrating on its poverty alleviation strategy, there was a shift from project lending to policy-based lending. This was characterized by macro and micro-economic policy prescriptions, including a global education policy and lending for education, based on a free market ideology and the corresponding notion of human capital (Malhotra, n.d.; Rose, 2003; Rutkowski, 2007; Colclough, 1996); the details of which are discussed in Chapter 3.

One CSO member underlined the need for ownership and participation in policy development in relation to improved coordination thus:

Such an approach would help bring about an enhanced ownership, greater involvement of players, as well as teamwork in policy processes. This would in turn promote coordination, synergy, pooling of resources, and increased results in service delivery, as well as enhance accountability and transparency in policy implementation (CS1, June 09).

Another CSO member pointed out the need for education partners to consolidate their efforts and maximizing the available resources, indicating that ‘...partnerships were formed simply to consolidate the efforts of the different partners while at the same time maximize on the usage of resources that they put together’ (CS3, May 09).

While some perceptions of this group of actors were consistent with those of DPs and government officials – including the viewpoint on improved ownership – the perspective of civil society pertaining to ownership draws out another dimension that is

critical to the partnership process and accords with general management principles on the decision-making process. This is derived from the premise that if people participate from the beginning, the implementation of decisions made will be easier than if they had not been fully involved. Rather than the notion that DPs and government officials expressed as national ownership of the development agenda whereby the state takes the lead in the development process (Malawi Government, 2007), the kind of ownership championed by civil society was that by all actors/stakeholders involved in the SWAp process. Such a relation was expected to translate into ownership of the NESP and thereby facilitate effective implementation of the plan. This view seems to be consistent with the notion of common ownership that characterizes the participation and involvement that civil society espouses.

One CSO member explained what might be described as a “failed partnership” attempt during the development of the PIF, which had experienced limited participation, thus necessitating a change to democratic planning:

We changed from desktop planning to participatory planning as an element of democracy... I would say that the PIF period was a bit dogmatic in the sense that...there was a man at the centre who probably sometimes even faked consultations and participation (CS2, May 09).

The case of the PIF does not seem to conform to SWAp principles because it basically represents a top down approach and limited participation (Brown et al., 2001). However, the views of civil society on the experiences of the NESP tended to point towards a positive change in this regard.

Other viewpoints expressed by CSO members focused on enhancing the process of policy formulation and implementation, with a hint of enhanced participation, indicating that, ‘*From my own analysis, I believe the purpose of such partnerships has been to scale up sector wide and broad-based policy planning, implementation, monitoring and review*’ (CS1, June 09). Similarly, ‘*The partnerships are necessary because it is actually argued that in policy planning, the best policies you come [up] with are not the ones you think are good, but the best policies are the ones in which the people are participating*’ (CS2, May 2009).

These perceptions tend to indicate the value that NGOs and CSOs place on the participatory policy formulation process. This view is consistent with the new role in global governance that these organisations have assumed. This is corroborated by Sending and Neumann (2006, p.652), who point out that, ‘...governmental rationality is at work whereby the political agency and self-association of civil society emerges as a key asset for the formulation of new policies and for the practice of governing societies,’ particularly in ensuring that public opinion is represented.

However, it is important to note that wide participation that ensures the representation of a variety of viewpoints is welcome in the SWAp process. According to Brown et al. (2001), the criteria for the assessment of participation in a SWAp include the involvement of civil society in identifying targets and NGOs in determining sector priorities – and the bottom line to all this is participation. According to neo-liberal economic policy, participation is encouraged whereby communities are expected to be involved in issues that affect them; and, in this case, civil society participation in the SWAp is taken to represent the views of the wider community.

While acknowledging the participation of NGOs and CSOs in the education SWAp process, it is necessary to point out that their participation in Malawi was perceived largely by some of the representatives to be as tokenistic in nature, and came at the advanced stage of policy formulation. One CSO member alluded to recent government acceptance, pointing out that, ‘*In some cases we have seen that the partnerships have recognized the role of civil society in SWAP processes*’ (CS1, June 09). However, this did not accord with the view of another CSO member, who, whilst recognizing the positive stance of the government in demonstrating its appreciation of civil society highlighting areas in which the former needed to improve, was also quick to point out previous sour relations:

I think in the first years – between 2002 to maybe 2006 – there was some sort of hostility between government and civil society, where government was looking at civil society as people who just make noise. But, actually, sometimes, it was very difficult for civil society to engage meaningfully with the government departments. But this time around, I think there is a lot of positivity – things have normalized. [There] is also a positive change in terms of these partnerships (CS2, May 09).

Other perspectives of CSO members further revealed the new monitoring or watchdog role that civil society had assumed in global governance. Some of these views indicated that the new role of civil society organizations had also been widely acknowledged and endorsed by UNICEF and UNDP (2008): *'CSOs have a key role to play in promoting government accountability and responsiveness, tracking progress and ensuring that ministries such as [the] MoEST¹ are achieving their intended goals'* (CS1, June 09).

Civil society plays a major role in ensuring government accountability through carrying out various monitoring and evaluation of the public sector, a function that is also fulfilled by the strengthening of NGO capacity. This point was corroborated by one CSO member thus: *'...civil society independent monitoring activities such as LEG² budget analysis and CSCQBE budget tracking surveys have been a trigger for public officials to account for their actions, especially in [the] use of funds'* (CS1, June 09).

In spite of the observed shortfalls in CSO participation in the education SWAp process – particularly during the critical initial planning stage – both DPs and government officials were unanimous on the role of civil society as a watchdog. However, this tends to raise concerns about the effectiveness of civil society in carrying out such a role with limited information on programme budgets or the rationale for decisions on programme activities. This concern emanates from the lack of CSO involvement at the planning stage, a problem identified by Brown et al. (2001) as a common phenomenon in SWAp processes that also has implications for ownership of the implementation process. The question thus arises as to whether the participation of civil society was deliberately restricted at a crucial stage of the Malawian education SWAp process in order to suppress its effective monitoring.

Another CSO view suggests that they were concerned with partnership inequality due to the power politics that had a tendency to frequently affect the SWAp process and negatively influence policy development. This is exemplified by the following comment: *'In my view, the shift was influenced by the growing need to change [the] attitude of stakeholders and reduce power politics, thereby bringing in a sense of equality in policy development processes'* (CS1, June 09). Thus, unless the SWAp

¹ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

² Link for Education Governance.

partnership finds a way to reduce the influence of the power relation that is inherent in the act of DP funding provision, the policy cannot be implemented according to its principles and will therefore continue to be negatively affected.

The views of different actors on the emergence of education SWAp partnerships notwithstanding, it is clear that there was a consensus in that the purpose of the partnership was to achieve the harmonization of aid; address the fragmentation and compartmentalization of aid arising from the project approach; and to achieve sector coherence and sustainability. These widely expressed opinions about what the education SWAp was expected to accomplish tend to indicate the extent to which the project approach had fragmented support to the education sector, and hence created high expectations for the new aid modality to reverse this trend.

It is therefore not surprising to note that these views also seem to have underscored the element of high expectation that actors held in respect of the education SWAp partnership, which inadvertently depended on how they interacted and perceived the theoretical concepts of a SWAP. Such a stance can be problematic given the dependency on aid that Malawi – along with other developing countries – has on the North/developed countries. This relation also involves the corresponding influence that donors/development partners have on determining sector priorities that reflect their own interests and ideologies (Samoff, 2004; Brown et al., 2001). Such a relation can be identified as a power issue – who has the power to decide on sector priorities, policies and plans? This is another aspect of the SWAp that is examined later in this thesis.

5.3 Has the Education SWAp Partnership Been Effective to Date?

The question of whether the education SWAp process has proved to be effective seems to be closely tied to actors' perceptions of the actual emergence of partnership in the process. Moreover, the divergent opinions on what it has achieved so far tend to disclose firmly held beliefs that are rooted in the conceptual understanding of a SWAp.

One imperative worth noting with regard to perceptions of SWAp partnership achievement is that data collection was carried out over a lengthy period and thus

covered different stages of the SWAp process. Consequently, the views of actors tended to vary depending on the stage of the SWAp process when the data was collected. These variations show that actors put emphasis on different priorities, which further tends to reveal the differing specific areas of interest, concern and expectations they had. Again, these do not seem to be completely divorced from their opinions on the emergence of the education SWAp partnership. This suggests that there is a measure of consistency in these actors' presentation of their views that could stem from their differing respective backgrounds.

5.3.1 DP Perspectives on the Education SWAp Process – Theory vs. Practice

In an attempt to highlight some of the achievements of the education SWAp process, DPs cited areas such as policy, planning, harmonization, alignment, capacity, funding, the sector plan, international targets, and implementation. Smith (2005) also identifies these factors as being central to donors when supporting SWAps.

On the other hand, DPs noted the frustrations encountered around meeting FTI requirements: *'Meeting the FTI standards was tough. The government at one point was frustrated because the document was going through so many reviews and so many consultants and from different angles, people would look at different issues. However, what featured most was the sector plan'* (DP2, June 10).

Indeed, the FTI process took a long time (Brown et al., 2007), with some DPs pursuing qualification vigorously in spite of the position of the government, which seemed powerless to stop the process, as one DP who seemed to share the government's frustration further observed:

Again, it required the government to just lead the process and say 'this is our plan, this is our document.' We have had contributions from all angles, but I think we have reached a stage where we want to own this plan and move forward, but there has been a lot of back and forth; it took more than five years to get the plan at this stage' (DP2, June 10).

Nevertheless, the majority of DPs pointed out that the partnership had achieved a plan that would guide their support to the sector. It seems that the most important achievement of the education SWAp process was the development of the NESP, upon which other subsequent achievements were based. The emphasis on ensuring the formulation of a sector plan is consistent with the theoretical concept of a SWAp (Brown et al., 2001), an area of emphasis that is supported by DP governments. This point was stressed by the vast majority of DPs who highlighted the sector plan as a positive change.

The following statements from two DPs independently are indicative of this perspective:

So far, DPs and government have developed the National Education Sector Plan; in the next ten years, all partners will buy into the plan. We now have an official policy document (DP1, Jan. 09).

I think what has changed for the better is the development of the sector plan because this sector plan is now the document that has been agreed upon by all partners (DP2, June 10).

Another DP view not only points towards the sector plan but also other areas that were improved, such as harmonization: *'What has changed for the better are harmonization and alignment through [the] sector plan and joint sector reviews. Also, fundraising has been simplified as sector priorities are defined' (DPM4, June 09).*

It may be inferred from the above observations that the development of the sector plan not only received special recognition but also intrinsically formed the basis for collaboration in the education SWAp partnership. Moreover, it facilitated the process of meeting targets in other areas identified by the DPs. This emphasizes the underpinning function of the SWAp, which highlights the fundamental need for clear policies and strategies (Brown et al., 2001; Foster, 2007). At the same time, partnership is reinforced as a critical element of the SWAp (Buchert, 2002) that deserves to be well nurtured.

The education SWAp partnership provided a platform for all actors to address issues of planning, funding, capacity development, ownership and leadership, and harmonization and alignment during the process of NESP development. The views of DPs who were

conversant with the 2005 Paris Declaration – now recognized as a landmark international agreement that strives to enhance aid effectiveness (Wood et al., 2008) – focused on its key elements:

I think the streamlining of resources...has really [revitalized the] harmonization of objectives. ...government takes the lead, but we development partners also provide technical information on how we interpret such objectives formulation – to me that has been very good. I think the NESP is going to be a very powerful document that we are going to use. ...you talk of Millennium Development Goals – all of us are party to that. ...But as development partners, our existence is to assist the government to attain these objectives...that we believe in (DP2, June 10).

Another DP highlighted a further aspect of the partnership that had been streamlined: ‘Fundraising has been simplified as sector priorities are defined’ (DPM4, June 09), which facilitated the mobilization of funds.

Ownership, leadership, harmonization and alignment are some of the key principles of a SWAp based on the Paris Declaration, which emphasizes government leadership as actors develop policies and strategies such as the NESP. Thus, DP activities – including systems and programme activities in the sector – are harmonized, and support is aligned to national development strategies and government systems (Government of Malawi, 2007).

The attitude of DPs can be largely attributed to their role in international development aid, and the consequent urgency and sense of mission of donor/DP governments to demonstrate results attached to these processes, as highlighted by Brown et al. (2001). However, contrary to views that identified the principles of the Paris Declaration as areas in need of improvement, evidence on the ground tends to show that DP activities did not conform to the theoretical underpinnings of a SWAp, as one government official indicated:

I believe that people were supposed to follow the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, but experience has shown that the principles were not fully applied. The whole issue is to harmonize aid, but we are just trying to do that, not that we have actually accomplished, and the principles somewhere, somehow, they were breached (GOE3, May, 09).

The literature on SWApS also highlights situations in which DPs' actions tend to undermine the government's role of leadership in policy-making processes (Samoff, 2004; Brown et al., 2001), which lead to negative results.

The views of DPs alluded to the principles of government leadership, harmonization and alignment in the interactions of the SWAp process during the development of policies and strategies, which supported international targets such as the MDGs. One DP view acknowledged interest in supporting these targets, but also emphasized a shared interest with the government when it came to MDGs, which the DP later described as a government agenda. However, these international targets were agreed upon by DP governments together with the World Bank, which linked aid to education and further funding to meet international targets such as the MDGs, EFA and its poverty reduction strategy (PRS) (Colclough, 2005).

This is to be achieved within the context of human capital theory, which, being championed by the World Bank, is currently amongst the most dominant models in development today (Blundell et al., 1999; Marshall, 1998). To underscore this linkage, Brown et al. (2007) describe the NESP in light of the Malawian Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), which represents the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS): 'The NESP is a statement of the GoM's³ plan in education for the next 10 years, in line with the MGDS.' Taking into consideration human capital theory, education also features as a means of reducing poverty and achieving economic development (OECD, 2007; Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, 2006; Smith, 2005).

The question for many developing countries with regard to these international goals is what the basis is for determining this benchmark; how does this yardstick measure all? Special considerations should have been made because not all countries are at the same level of education development, in spite of FTIs that in themselves presuppose the attainment of a certain level of development in order to access the funds.

³ Government of Malawi.

Some DPs pointed out that the capacity of the ministry had been improved and training programmes implemented. One DP expressed another aspect of capacity declaring that, *'What has changed for the better includes systems – financing systems – capacity to implement policies'* (DP2, June 10).

Although DPs cited systems development at the Ministry of Education, this tended to be an area that remained a challenge to the implementation of the NESP, which was signed and mandated as the main education SWAp document in Malawi. Evidence from both the literature and those DPs interviewed after the NESP had been approved points to glaring gaps in the capacity of the Ministry of Education with regard to the development process of the SWAp and how the NESP might be implemented.

The literature on SWAp highlights capacity problems, particularly with the implementation of the NESP (Brown et al., 2007, 2001). It is worth noting that some improvement in capacity had been accomplished, such as that in terms of generating timely statistical data, as alluded to by one DP who cited *'...planning statistical data produced on [a] regular basis and timely; the partnerships have facilitated this'* (DPM3, Jan. 09), which can be corroborated. However, the situation on the ground tended to conflict with these views, particularly in respect of capacity around systems. Therefore, the perspectives on capacity expressed by DPs could have been driven more by what they expected to achieve rather than what was actually accomplished. Indeed, several DP views seemed to reflect their theoretical understanding of a SWAp more than the reality of practice.

Since DPs are accountable to their home governments in ensuring that SWAps are implemented efficiently in the developing countries to which they provide aid, the imperative for the former is to effect appropriate changes that are seen to achieve results. Therefore, their dispositions could be motivated by the sense of urgency that is prevalent among DPs to show that they are achieving results within the stipulated time frame, regardless of the reality on the ground which may indicate that nothing concrete has been accomplished, as also observed by Brown et al., (2001).

In spite of the fact that DPs suggested that government capacity to engage in a SWAp as well as its ability to implement the policy was lacking, the same DPs also identified government capacity as an area that had been enhanced through the education SWAp partnership. The explanation for this contradiction could lie in the DP preoccupation with government capacity building and encouraging it to implement a SWAp, which is consistent with the whole notion of adopting such a policy. As pointed out previously, their views on capacity tended to emphasize the gap between theory and practice. Just because government officials were engaged in the SWAp process it does not necessarily follow that the capacity of individual officials or that of the ministry as an institution was automatically developed.

There is therefore a need to reconceptualize the whole capacity issue as it relates to a SWAp process, and highlight the requisite type of capacity and the level at which it can be assumed to have been attained through such a policy. There is evidence to suggest that the capacity the Malawian SWAp process was expected to realize was not fully attained, as indicated by one DP who expressed concern in terms of quantity and quality with regard to government officials:

I think also the SWAp is trying to achieve some kind of format whereby you are reducing the transaction costs of meeting government people; they are busy people, they are understaffed, and they have capacity limitations, so the same issue should not be discussed three times (DP2, June 10).

Another aspect of capacity that DPs brought out was linked to resources: *'The resourcing of funding is broadened, the resourcing of technical expertise also is broadened, and this is a big benefit'* (DPM2, May 09). However, this raises questions about how much of it has been translated into increased funding to the whole sector; let alone basic education, an area of priority to many DPs.

Another DP highlighted better funding: *'Funding has improved – funding for programmes that have been identified'* (DPM3, Jan. 09); but this was with specific reference to funding the PCAR programme while there were still unresolved issues around DPs not fully disclosing what they might commit to funding the NESP (Brown et al., 2007). There were additional concerns whereby government views seemed to reveal an element of frustration at the inability of some DPs to commit to the pool fund

and a general failure to coordinate SWAp partnership terms, as one CSO member indicated:

The 2007 MGDS Review for Education noted that some donors' central policies do not allow them to commit themselves to joint agreements with fellow partners in development; thereby, prolonging unilateral or bilateral agreements and implementation respectively, for example, Agency DP2 and Agency DP5. In addition...there is [a] tendency for donors to oversubscribe to a particular subsector, for example, primary education, at the expense of others (CS1, June 09).

Funding is an area that needs to be highlighted and addressed in this partnership as it is closely linked to the SWAp, which is a modality for disbursing international aid effectively and consequently expected to improve funding to a given sector. This renders funding a potential area of interest in terms of realizing positive results to all actors in the partnership.

Probably inspired by the stage at which the education SWAp then was, one DP explained the course of its development:

[The] processes of coming up with the SWAp have also been effective because we have been setting up the SWAp Secretariat and various donors have been providing support in terms of technical assistance in various specific areas. There is the Policy and Planning Committee, which is the coordinating body for the SWAp process; it is the highest-level body for coordination. And under that, we have the technical working groups, which are also providing input to the SWAp process... Each subsector programme is developed by the technical working groups and is going to be monitored by the same... We are all sitting together – government and development partners – deciding on what budget and what priorities (DP2, June 10).

This perception has been provided in order to paint a broad picture of the process after the NESP had been approved together with the FTI and its funds released. Therefore, some technical assistants (TAs) referred to in the statement were those provided during preparation for FTI qualification and others were those required to support the implementation of the SWAp or NESP.

Unfortunately, the issue of TAs in terms of government capacity building/development has not been widely debated. TAs are hired by DPs, in most cases from their national

catchment areas, and are thus perceived as representing their own interests at the expense of the host government. The GoM (2007) explicitly expresses its wish to reduce technical assistance, indicating the need to develop state TA policy guidelines. On the other hand, Brown et al. (2001) highlight the utilization of TAs as a donor/DP strategy to overcome capacity problems. Nevertheless, such a policy should be considered with caution, taking into consideration the issue of sustainability, and the transfer of knowledge and skills around the capacity building of local officials.

Admittedly, FTI preparations took a long time, as pointed out earlier by one DP, and as also acknowledged in relation to NESP development by Brown et al. (2007). This process had negative repercussions for the partnership because it created uncertainty over why overall FTI preparation was delaying the NESP, and why some actors were impeding the release of much-needed funds that could have addressed several issues confronting the sector. Although the significance of FTI funding cannot be underestimated, the process of qualifying for the funds can be painfully slow and demanding in terms of sector plan development; and the experience in Malawi was no exception. In an attempt to explain the long painful process while at the same time trying to maintain a unity of purpose amongst the DPs, one of their number commented:

What I have also noted is that, again as development partners, we have different formalities and different mandates. For some, focusing on the FTI was the thing. Focusing on the FTI was the main point, but as an education planner myself, what I am trying to say is that FTI is just one of those things which we should be doing on a daily basis, we should not forget everything else because of FTI (DP2, June 10).

The FTI process took six years, from the initiation of the NESP in 2004 to its approval and the release of funds in 2010. The whole issue of developing a sector plan in the context of the FTI as a qualifying yardstick meant that the NESP as the key document had to undergo several amendments to suit FTI qualification criteria, as alluded to by one DP:

I am confident that the process of developing the sector plan has also led into having the FTI endorsement; but first, it was the sector plan then the FTI process, just like a litmus test of whether we can pass international standards of education planning (DP2, June 10).

The FTI issue should not be considered in isolation, as the initiative is nested within World Bank policy as an element of the education SWAp partnership at country level. Apart from unleashing its own vast resources, the FTI is still identified with the World Bank (FTI has been replaced by Global Partnership for Education) and may therefore be viewed as a way of ensuring that its agenda to influence education policy is consolidated within FTI qualification criteria. Accordingly, the questions to ask about FTI are what is the basis for determining these criteria? Whose interests do such criteria try to serve? And why is the World Bank responsible for FTI funds?

Yet another DP view reveals something about the conflicting interests of DP governments in respect of macro policy issues that could identify the FTI as a prerequisite for pooling funds:

Maybe the FTI process has got specific benchmarks in terms of where we come from. If we do the FTI and endorse it, it is a deliverable to one donor; maybe it's not a deliverable to the other donor. Our deliverable is just a plan (DP2, June 10).

What tend to be at stake in SWAp processes that affect policy and strategy development are the influences of different DPs, which, unintentionally, are not always the same. This may be one of the reasons why international development aid does not seem to register much progress in sub-Saharan Africa. This aspect has also been identified in relation to the general aid environment in the Malawian context by Booth et al. (2006, p.x):

First, Malawi seems to be an extreme case of a pattern of interaction between government and donors that weakens aid effectiveness throughout the region. The pattern has to do with the logic of the aid relationship, but is often intensified by donor behavior, as has happened in Malawi.

Consequently, all actors in the education SWAp process need to take precautionary measures in the way they interact in this partnership and strive to achieve meaningful results just as they did with the project approach.

5.3.2 Government Perspectives on the Education SWAp Partnership – Principles vs. Practice

While DP views on the achievements of the education SWAp partnership to date were broadly positive, government officials' perceptions were slightly different. Although the majority of them highlighted areas of enhanced planning and funding (which were linked to the activities of the embryonic SWAp around PCAR) and the common pursuit of goals, quite a number of their remarks revealed discontent in the way the partnership influenced the education SWAp process, particularly in the development of the NESP.

Contrary to the principles of the SWAp, government officials highlighted issues around micro versus macro policy development and micro versus macro politics that seemed to have adverse effects on education policy formulation (which was also suggested by CSO and NGOs members). DPs were regarded as persistently attempting to influence the NESP process in line with their countries' ideologies, policies and interests – which is in contradiction of the Paris Declaration. Therefore, it seemed that the recipient government was prevented from taking the lead and assuming ownership in determining sector priorities. The following comments made by one government official stand as evidence to this effect:

Development partners just used the education ten-year development programme as an entry point for their agendas; because much as maybe technocrats in government would like to push their priorities to be in the development plan, donors found their way to articulate issues to align with their support policies. So, in some cases, where maybe government would have liked to have a teacher training programme which would run for two years, donors would say, 'No, run [a] training programme for one year, and we will put the rest of the money towards rehabilitation of TTCs [teacher training colleges], ' instead of training our teachers. So, in terms of priorities, we wanted more teachers and not more structures in teacher training colleges; that is not what we wanted (GOE3, May 09).

There were other similar complaints from government officials who expressed some frustration at the undue influence DPs had on the overall policy development process – which raises the question of who has the autonomy to determine the priority areas that are addressed in an education policy document. Contrary to the Paris Declaration – which underscores the government's role in setting its own priorities based on the

situation the ground in order to achieve effective utilization of donor funds (Hyden, 2008) – empirical findings reveal that DPs tend to hold the power to influence priority areas based on their own interests. This poses another dilemma in policy-making in developing countries, in which tension seems to arise due to conflicting interests between macro and micro policy, and macro and micro politics in the interaction between DPs and the recipient government.

The big question in this regard is who knows what is best for any country other than its own people – who have the widest understanding of the context in which they operate. If the state is accorded the liberty to identify priorities that go into sector plans, its government will ensure implementation of these priorities because they will be regarded as directly addressing issues that are of concern to the country. However, if DPs assume this responsibility and failure is registered, they have a tendency to blame the recipient country, an argument that Easterly (2009) advances in his detailed article “Can the West Save Africa”. Additionally, he argues that blaming Africa for its failure to embrace change implies that the West and its DPs know what is best for the continent or a given country on it, and that their ideas are right.

The majority of government officials highlighted planning, funding, and working together/sharing ideas and knowledge as areas that had improved due to the SWAp partnership. However, again, the emphasis on funding was made with particular reference to the implementation of the PCAR programme; which is consistent with what these actors identified as the embryonic or mini SWAp that emerged from a project initiated one by DP, but was later embraced by others. Therefore, this raises the question of whether such a funding enhancement can be applied across the board:

...there was a time when we were in [had a] problem with textbooks for Standards 3 and 7. Had we, for example, depended on the traditional partner, who is Agency DP1, to make the provision for the textbooks last year, we wouldn't have implemented the curriculum in Standard 3 and 7. But in the partnership, we also had Agency DP4 who had resources for the procurement of textbooks; we were able to let Agency DP4 help us in procuring for Standard 3 and 7, let Agency DP1 do Standard 6, and, for next year, let Agency DP1 do the procurement for Standard 4 and 8. That kind of arrangement is helping (GOE2, May 09).

When one compares these views with those of the DPs, it is apparent that each actor had specific areas of interest: while DPs focused on the sector plan, the government was more concerned with funding. This is consistent with government perceptions on the emergence of the education SWAp partnership, whereby funding also featured prominently as one of the main reasons for setting it up. Notwithstanding the ostensibly positive focus on funding – particularly with reference to PCAR – there was still a dissenting voice on the government side, which seemed to reveal an aspect of inconsistency on the part of the DPs as they pursued their own areas of interest. The latter appeared to switch policy at will when it came to implementation, disregarding promises made at the initial planning stage, as one government official pointed out:

I can say fairly, the partnerships have been effective in the sense of collecting bits and pieces of resources to form one huge resource, but challenges are still there because you find other partners saying we will provide so much; so, within the framework you count them as in, but during implementation they are standing outside (GOE1, May 09).

Some further comments from the government perspective provide corroboration of the perception that although DPs might have promised funding, they did not necessarily honour agreements:

So, donors in some cases can say one thing at planning stage and mean a different thing at all [altogether] in terms of implementation. So yes, in terms of amounts of money that have trickled into the government coffers, we can say they are quite substantial, but with strings attached – they would still want you do what they have envisaged (GOE3, May 09).

...I find a problem is that when people have pledged we will give you so much...in the end, they don't provide that; and it has forced government to go look for other sources to supplement in order to close the gap. So that in the PCAR process...we have had donors saying, 'Money is not a problem – we will fund that.' But, of late, you find that they are freezing – some kind of fatigue – to the extent that government has got a list of activities to do, but funding is not coming...to the extent that when they want to give us money, they would now want to do micromanagement (GOE1, May 09).

Such revelations tend to show who had the power to make decisions, on funding in particular, which left the government doubly dependent on the DPs. This created unequal partnership relations that were regarded as defeating the rationale of the SWAp

because it could not be implemented according to its theoretical concepts. The DPs exerted a lot of influence and were inclined to dictate what they wanted to accomplish on account of their control over the purse strings. Thus, the success of a SWAp requires that DPs/donors minimize the power of funding, along with its corresponding influence, and begin to support the recipient government based on priorities identified by the latter.

5.3.3 NGO and CSO Perspectives on the Education SWAp Partnership – Principles vs. Practice

The CSOs and NGOs, expressed views that, on the one hand, reflected agreement with both DPs and government officials on enhanced planning, policy development, funding, and the opportunity to work together; but, on the other, expressed different views that were consistent with the new ideological stance of the watchdog.

One CSO member alluded to the lack of trust that DPs had in the government that was seen to be affecting progress towards funding: *‘This was compounded by low levels of confidence in donors on partner government institutions, more especially in handling of finances ... ’ (CS1, June 09)*. Consequently, there is a need for the partnership to be guided by SWAp principles. While acknowledging a positive achievement, another CSO member also concluded with a precautionary sentiment: *‘To some extent, the partnerships have been effective in ensuring the constant resource availability to the education sector; although much needs to be done to nurture the culture of [the] SWAp’ (CS1, June 09)*

Another CSO member, who identified policy development as an area for improvement, also raised a concern about participation that might have implications for the implementation of the SWAp programme:

A number of things have changed for the better in the SWAp process, and these include policy development: a sector wide policy has been developed in the name of NESP, thereby ensuring that the education sector moves from a fragmented to a consolidated policy framework. However, the process of developing it was not broad based, and that makes it difficult for communities to effectively participate in implementation (CS1, June 09).

This individual also suggested a corrective measure for the achievement of effective implementation: *'In the final analysis, a lot has to be done to devolve the language of SWAp to the lower levels of policy implementation; more especially, at school, community and household levels (SC1, June 09).*

Another viewpoint of civil society that accorded with its role as watchdog focused on assessment, citing the example of ongoing review as a useful process for monitoring progress; however, his remarks also implied that there was room for improvement:

Generally speaking, the annual joint sector reviews are quite helpful, although the extent to which we are learning from them is very minimal. But the mere fact that the ministry is able to bring together stakeholders and partners maybe once or twice a year and review our programmes, and see where we are going, and review our policies is a very positive change (CS2, May 09).

Such NGO and CSO viewpoints were consistent with the global mandate that empowered them to oversee the process and therefore ensure that the education partnership was implemented according to SWAp theory. However, while highlighting areas for improvement consistent with essential elements of SWAp, they were also concerned with the shortcomings of the partnership and elements of weakness in the process. One CSO member made the following remarks on government leadership:

I think what has never changed, what is worrying people, is the high turnover of key people in the ministry. Because between probably 2005, when we had a major education conference leading to a number of reviews to date, we have [had] I don't know how many ministers, I don't know how many PSs,⁴ and every time we are losing institutional memory. Every time a new PS comes, people have to begin inducting him on things which some of us felt they're obvious, so we are losing on that one (CS2, May 09).

One view that civil society generally held very strongly was the positive change in the relationship between it and the government: *'On the positive side, is the acceptance by government of the existence of the civil society and its contribution' (CSC2, May 09).*

Contrary to other countries in which NGOs and CSOs are state-funded (Sending and Neumann, 2006), the Malawian context differs in that these organizations are financed

⁴ Principal Secretaries.

by DPs/donor countries. This also serves to explain the inherent hostility that has persisted between NGOs/CSOs and the government. Such a situation could possibly also explain the relation between civil society and the government in Tanzania, where the government seems to have little to do with civil society (Hyden, 2008).

The advent of the Malawian education SWAp partnership process with the 2005 Paris Declaration setting the agenda for development assistance meant that, to a large extent, civil society felt a sense of insecurity in terms of accessing DP funds. Its perception was that all funding from that moment would be transferred through the government, rendering it, civil society, hopeless and helpless where its organizational function was concerned, as clearly explained by one CSO member:

The development of the NESP, and actually sharing of roles within the NESP between the government departments and the civil society, and the freeing of development partners to say, because when we were developing the NESP and hearing of SWAp, we were thinking that probably the government will close funding to the civil society, and funding will only be going to government. But this time around, we know that depending on the quality of your programmes, development partners are open to fund civil society and government (CS2, May 09).

This statement reflects the complexity of CSO operations in developing countries. Indeed, the position of civil society seems fragile in the sense that it is as dependent as the government on funding, and this might weaken the ability of the former to articulate problems arising from the activities of DPs who fund their very existence. Another constraint might originate from the fact that the government has the political power to ban CSOs if they do not conform to political pressure on the ground.

The worst case scenario would be one in which, relegated to a position of mere competition for DP funding, the government and civil society engage in a witch-hunt for each other's malpractices with a view to reporting them to the DPs. The question to ask here is whose interest does civil society aim to protect – that of the government or the DPs.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the emergence of the Malawian education SWAp partnership was directly linked to international aid its targets, and internal reform processes such as the PIF and PCAR, which were initiated under the influence of international aid trends that required developing countries to adopt the SWAp as a new aid modality to replace the project approach.

The process of adjusting to the demands of a global community that tied aid to international targets such as poverty reduction, EFA and MDGs created the partnership for education SWAp process, which saw the coming together of the government, DPs, NGOs and CSOs to collaborate in the development of an education SWAp document, the NESP. This partnership, which began with small thematic groupings, evolved into a single large education SWAp alliance, with the inclusion of civil society as one of the main actors assuming a watchdog role. The incorporation of civil society in this partnership was prompted by pressure from a global governance and international development agenda in the context of a neo-liberal economic policy prescription, which accorded the market and civil society a new role as non-state actors (Malhotra, n.d.; Sending and Neumann, 2006).

The SWAp has been identified as a promising aid modality. In spite of shortfalls experienced during partnership interactions in the education SWAp process – particularly during the PIF period when most DPs still operated in the project mode – the purpose of initiating such an education policy was associated with the following qualities: improved planning, harmonization, alignment, coordination, ownership, government leadership, enhanced funding, and capacity building. The three main areas of most concern to all actors in this partnership were planning, funding and harmonization. The need to address the effects of fragmentation that characterized the project approach featured highly in this partnership.

Capacity was identified as an area of great concern, particularly in terms of the ability of government officials to engage in a SWAp process according to the principles of ownership and leadership – as a certain amount of capacity is required to lead the

SWAp process by bringing together DPs and civil society, and clearly advancing government priorities. This therefore meant that the government needed a minimum capacity to engage meaningfully in a SWAp process that itself involved the further building of government capacity. Contrary to the identified lack of capacity among government actors, this was one area that was claimed to have been enhanced.

While there were areas that saw some improvement and achievement, these were slight due to continual problems with partnership interaction that were manifested in the conflicting interests of the government and the DPs. Funding to the sector was improved to some extent, but only in relation to the implementation of PCAR in spite of inconsistencies between what DPs pledged and what was actually delivered. Efforts towards harmonization and alignment, as well as ownership and leadership, were constrained by DP attitude in placing their priorities above those of the government.

Although there was common understanding of the concepts of a SWAp and that the process was to be guided by the principles in the 2005 Paris Declaration, the partnership continued to experience some negative power relations. DPs used the power of funding to influence their priorities in the development of policies and strategies. This adversely affected the SWAp process and frustrated the government.

There are two main issues relating to this partnership that require further investigation and theorization. The first is around capacity and the notion that a SWAp involves government capacity building. In the Malawian SWAp experience, right from the beginning, government capacity was identified as wanting; a finding that calls for a redefinition of the minimum capacity required to implement a SWAp. If engaging in a SWAp process helps build capacity, the question is why is it that SWAp experiences from many countries have identified a lack of capacity at the initiation stage (Brown et al., 2001).

Such capacity is associated mainly with the competence to efficiently absorb the large amounts of money that are made available to implement SWAp programmes, a point made by one DP who was interviewed about the absorption of funds after Malawi had obtained FTI assistance who indicated that:

I know the Ministry is trying to do their best and agreed that we need to look into other new professions to get better people and we have to pay them; we have a complete problem now that is in procurement because to spend US\$267 million over three years in addition to the Government budget then we have to have a strong unit there which knows how to deal with procurement (DP3, Oct. 2010).

Therefore, another concern is the issue of trust as it relates to the capacity of the government. DPs' lack of trust restrains them from releasing funds to governments through certain funding modalities that they perceive as risky. This is what deters them from using government systems and procedures for disbursement and procurement. They have consistently claimed that government systems and procedures are weak, even after going through a SWAp processes. In the Malawian SWAp experience, DPs claimed that capacity had been enhanced; therefore, the question is has their level of trust also been enhanced such that they have sufficient confidence in the government (as owners of the SWAp) to facilitate the disbursement of funds.

The other issue around the SWAp partnership concerns the role of civil society in the process, given the Malawian context – or that of any other sub-Saharan African country – in which CSOs are funded by DPs and tend to be in constant competition with the government where funding is concerned. They, at the same time, can easily become vulnerable to changes in state policy if they do not toe the line of the government of the day. The questions to pose in this regard are what impact does civil society have on the SWAp process; whose interests are they protecting – those of the government or the DPs – and how effective is their watchdog role.

Chapter 6

Relationships – Do Different Actors Facilitate or Hinder the Realization of the Aims of the Education SWAp Partnership?

6.0 Introduction

While Chapter Five focused on differing views on the motivation for the initiation of the education SWAp partnership, this chapter examines the various actors' perspectives on their relationships and roles in the process. The first part investigates these relationships in detail, arguing that they can affect SWAp interactions either positively or negatively. The second part explores the actors' roles in the partnership, asserting that the government's leadership role can be affected by funding DPs provide, but also other factors. The third part examines actors' perceptions of their roles in the light of DP government and country office systems and mandates, contending that these can either facilitate or hinder the realization of the aims of the education SWAp partnership. The last part concludes by analysing the different perspectives of all the actors, and considers how the role of the government is affected by the prescriptions of international development aid in the context of a neo-liberal ideology that embraces civil society as an actor (King, 1992).

6.1 Relations within the Education SWAp Partnership

From the perspective of the majority of DPs, relations in the education SWAp process focused on the government and themselves in a partnership between two principal actors, civil society rarely being viewed as a major player. There was also emphasis on DP relations being organized around areas of focus or comparative advantage based on the different role of each DP in facilitating its support to the government. However, whilst corroborating one perception of relations among DPs, such views also disclosed an element of uneasiness in having a single individual, the DP chairperson, represent them to the government. Yet, this was one of the principles of the SWAp in that it was intended to reduce DP operational costs and save government time (Hamblin, 2006).

DPs expressed views on their role in this partnership that could not be completely divorced from the issue of power relations, one of them indicating that, *'We have DPs on one hand and on the other, government – to define the relationship, donors seem to have more power than government'* (DP1, Jan. 09). Thus, some DPs focused on the nature of relations among different actors; while others referred to their relation with civil society in the education SWAp process, although this was not widely viewed as part of the main partnership.

In describing relations among the different stakeholders in the partnership, DPs tended to underscore their unity when dealing with the government as the most effective way of supporting it. These points were made in the knowledge that no single DP could meet all the needs of the government; as one DP remarked, *'Partnership demands that we look at education systems holistically; none of the DPs has capacity to do everything alone'* (DP1, Jan. 09). Another DP commented, *'This is a big sector and none of the DPs will focus on the entire tip of the whole sector, so we focus on a specific item; the others will focus on a specific subsector until you get a global perspective of assistance into [on] the whole sector'* (DPM2, May 09).

Other DPs described the partnership in terms of DP operational areas and modalities, and their unity as they associated with the government (although such views seem to have been challenged from two angles, as will be pointed out later). One DP indicated that:

The relationships that we have are based on what I could say [call] comparative advantages: we know as DPs who is doing what and where they are mostly impacting, but as we relate to government, we try to make sure that the relationship of DP to government is one relationship; it's not individual relationships (DP2, June 10).

As highlighted earlier, although DPs generally agreed that they should maintain a singular relationship with the government in which they were represented by one DP chairperson, there were some dissenting views expressed by a few DPs that reflected elements of mistrust in this particular SWAp arrangement. Their fears included the argument that instead of representing their views adequately to the government, such a

chairperson might take advantage of the position to advance his or her organization's agenda – a point that corroborates the notion that DPs tend to prioritize their own national or organizational policies – as expressed by one DP:

We have a chair and a deputy and these represent DPs; and meet with government every week, and DPs meet every fortnight [the chair then meets with the PS]. This is a recent development that we are trying to achieve. The risk is that an individual, instead of pushing the agenda of DPs, the individual might push the agenda of his or her agency (DP1, Jan. 09).

Another DP voiced a similar opinion:

There are times when various development partners might want to push their own agenda over and above the national agenda, depending on what they think is important, also priorities that are set by their programmes, and also by their governments. So, there are some – not necessarily conflicts – but pulling around maybe, to want to operate in isolation (DPM5, May 09).

Highlighting a similar aspect of a partnership subject to different priorities, another DP remarked, *'The relationship may be positive if that system is working, but if there is lack of trust in the process and maybe other DPs are going to the government and discuss[ing] issues of their own interest without others knowing, that becomes a problem' (DP2, June 10).*

These perspectives tend to reveal an aspect of covert competition among DPs whereby each tried to maintain leverage over the others, which opposed the principle that all partners in the SWAp process should be equal without any particular one being accorded more space to advance his or her organization's agenda. However, it was observed from interactions in the partnership that it was the DPs who attempted to perpetuate such behaviour.

Emphasis on the unity of DPs can be linked to their expectations of the SWAp, which was supposed to accord them less accountability as the aid recipient government assumed that role, allowing them to realize closer interagency collaboration, as pointed out by Riddell et al. (2000). However, evidence from the present study suggests that this aspiration was threatened by the DP quest to fulfil individual government agendas,

which negatively affected relations between DPs and the probability of enhanced interagency collaboration.

Some DPs expressed views on relations around the different areas of focus that guided their support and contributions, one of them stating that, *'Within the DP partnership group, we have certain areas in which we operate'* (DP1, Jan 09). Another DP said, *'Basically you will be finding that DPs have principal areas of focus within a sector; and it all just means that therefore, if we are now pulling everything into a SWAp, then we have a global view of areas that are being addressed in a sector'* (DPM2, May 09).

As already pointed out, operation according to areas of comparative advantage seems to be a logical arrangement, given that no single DP had sufficient expertise or resources to adequately support the government; hence the need for a partnership. However, despite the fact that the majority of DPs agreed on areas of focus, comparative advantage, and expertise, such views did not go unchallenged:

In terms of 'A', we are also trying to explore new areas; no one should really confine another DP and say that you stay in that area and that is my territory. I think comparative advantage is good because that is where you have been working and that is where your knowledge is, and that is where your lessons are; but that should not prevent you from exploring other areas (DP2, June 10).

Other perspectives of DPs focused on the quality of the partnership, one of their number indicating that, *'The relationship has to be open and transparent, and sometimes it is not, but we are working towards it'* (DP3, October 10). Another DP pointed out that, *'On relationships, there is mutual respect and orderliness'* (DPM4, June 09), which, a certain lack of trust due to covert competition among DPs notwithstanding, seems to accord with the principles of a SWAp based on the Paris Declaration framework.

There were other viewpoints that touched on the issue of leadership, and concerns about how the prescribed leadership was threatened through the nature of relations in the SWAp partnership. One DP said, *'I would say much as leadership and the largest voice should be coming from government, the development partners, because of the resources and the expertise they are able to mobilize, have had a lot more say in the process'* (DPM1, June 09). A similar view to this was articulated by another DP, who stated that,

'On the DPs, certainly you'll probably be referring to issues like besides the chairs...you have a kind of sleeping partners...[the influence of whom] would depend on the amounts that they have on the table, the quality of participation – the people who are participating' (DPM2, May 09).

Although all DPs shared some common values that should have guided their professional conduct, the partnership tended to experience challenges due to other factors emanating from within the DP family. These were closely linked to the funding they provided to the government, a situation that further undermined the role of leadership and the concomitant ownership the government was expected to assume in the SWAp partnership according to the Paris Declaration. The financial muscle of the DPs seems to have exerted a greater influence on the manner in which the education SWAp partnership functioned, with each DP only too ready to advance its own and its government's priorities. This tended to negatively affect leadership and coordination not only on the part of the government but also within the DP community, as lamented by one member:

There are still some donors...maybe because they are big in financial terms and still bypassing the structure of the SWAp coordination which we are trying to do by going directly to the Secretary for Education, having their own negotiations, their own meetings... And that is a wrong thing, and misunderstanding of [sic] the importance of coordinating (DP3, Oct. 10).

Another dimension of the partnership leadership that seemed to concern DPs in terms of their relationship with the government was the frequent changes made at high ministerial level. This was regarded as not only hindering progress on the education SWAp process, but also perpetuating the government's dependency on DP knowledge, as pointed out independently by two DPs:

The lack of leadership on the part of government can be attributed to an extent to the frequent changes in the leadership of the ministry, particularly at the minister and PS levels. This has obviously slowed down the process, with the result that this process, which started as far back as years ago, is not [has not been] completed. (DPM1, March 09)

One problem is that there is [a] high turnover of PSs in the Ministry of Education. This limits them and they depend on DPs, who have more knowledge

and information. Likewise, there is [a] high turnover of directors, for example, Dr Jamu [pseudonym] replaced by Dr Dambo [pseudonym] (DPM3, Jan. 09).

When the NESP SWAp document was approved and FTI funds secured, one DP expressed disappointment that the Ministry of Education had lost its Director of Planning (as referenced in the above quotation) to an NGO that was sponsored by another DP. Unlike other occasions on which the Ministry of Education had changed leaders due to the government redeploying civil servants in its ministries, this change was prompted by the individual himself going in search of better pay. One DP who was outraged at this turn of events considered it to be poaching from the government and an act completely unacceptable:

We have seen a number of people, some of the best people of the ministry for the last one, two years, being poached by particularly Agency DP2 and Agency DP2's country firms hired by Agency DP2 or funded by Agency DP2, to do different consultancies in [the] education sector. They hire the people from the ministry ...and they offer them ten times as much as they get in the civil service at the moment. And the last [latest] one to be poached is the Director of Planning, Dr Dambo [pseudonym] (DP3, Oct. 10).

Arguably, the frequent changes in leadership at the Ministry of Education could be viewed as weakening the leadership role of the government and its ownership of the whole education SWAp process as well as its effective coordination; and could clear the way for the DPs to take over on a role intended for the government on a permanent basis.

The DPs had little to say about their connection with civil society in the partnership, broadly confining their comments to its role, with no proper description of their relationship with civil society. As pointed out in Chapter Five, this further underscores concerns around the effectiveness of civil society in the education SWAp partnership, especially given the critical nature of this role in terms of monitoring and supervision. It is feared that in the absence of an adequate clear relationship with key actors in the partnership there can be no meaningful monitoring and supervision of the implementation of education SWAp programmes.

Therefore, what the literature on SWAp suggests in the way of improving aid delivery and effectiveness notwithstanding, it seems that there are yet more unresolved

problems. The problematic nature of the SWAp partnership is partially identified by Courtney (2007), who found in his study of an education programme in Cambodia that it was difficult to specify correct professional conduct in the partnership. Based on my observations of the complex nature of the relationship in the education SWAp partnership in Malawi, which is affected by factors at several different levels, I am inclined to agree with Courtney's observation. However, beyond this, based on the evidence provided, I question the integrity of DPs that subscribe to global declarations and changes in international aid modalities while internally maintaining their separate mandates, interests and priorities.

Currently, issues of partnership relations are diverse and complicated, and therefore – contrary to what Ratcliffe and Macrae (1999) describe as having clear guidelines that help regulate the conduct of DPs and government – they require more than what has so far been suggested. The SWAp under study was subject to a set of guidelines drawn up under a code of conduct, yet all these challenges still existed.

Whilst DP perceptions of relations in the education SWAp partnership were varied, those of government officials focused predominantly on the area of funding as the basis of the relationship. Almost all government officials described the relationship in terms of power relations, with only a few highlighting other aspects. Their perceptions revealed a type of relationship that was dependent on the amount of funds a DP brought to the government, which would in turn determine the kind of relationship the DP would enjoy in the partnership, as expressed by one government official thus:

It all depends on what each partner is bringing to the partnership... You are looking at amounts of money in a particular programme, if you have one development partner who is pumping in a lot of money into a particular programme, sometimes they will tend to want to have their say. They say, 'I have the money, so I will be calling the shots' (GOE2, May 09).

In another statement, the same government official expounded further on how a relationship that thrived on money not only affected DPs but also influenced decisions taken in the partnership:

What I have observed is that the partner who is contributing the most would want to have a bigger say, and that's one that I am seeing as a major challenge.

You also see that even when the other development partners are discussing amongst themselves, the very same partner who is contributing quite a lot would want to influence the thinking (GOE2, May 09).

Another government official expressed similar views on funding, resources and the decision-making process. While acknowledging a degree of equity in the relationship, this government official was quick to identify a point of concern:

Generally, I can say that the relationships are fair, but you find that in any game, a see-saw could be found in the sense that when it comes to resource mobilization, the development partners have another heart because the government may not have resources, and that means decision-making is still skewed. So you might say we want a 100 million [dollar] programme...but the donor partners come and say, 'No, as long as you don't have capacity, then we will give you 50 million...' Because they have money, they will have more say than those who don't (GOE1, May 09).

This government official elaborated further on the challenges faced in the partnership due to the observed skewed decision-making in favour of DPs that seemed to insist that they should only grant a certain percentage of the funds requested by the government:

'If you want us to give you 100 million [dollars], you should tell us what you are going to provide;' forgetting that government already has resources that it is already providing in that particular subsector... 'You are asking for 10 million when you haven't provided even 2 million,' but the structure within government is already worth 20 million. And these are the challenges that we are having in terms of power relationships (GOE1, May 09).

Another government official identified how those with money tended to influence interactions in the partnership, stating that, *'Those who have got the money...even the development partners, if they have money, they have more say; normally, their influence is much more than those who do not contribute much' (GOC1, May 09).* This point was echoed by another government official who was equally concerned about this practice, asserting, *'You also see that even when the other development partners are discussing amongst themselves, the very same partner, who is contributing quite a lot, would want to influence the thinking' (GOE2, May 09).*

Another area that one government official highlighted was how DP funding could be seen to facilitate the special relationship the two actors enjoyed:

Some feel we are doing a lot and ours is the best, and also we are pumping in a lot of money in this; and others also feel that they receive favours from government. It's like there are some donors who feel more favoured by government, more accepted by government, than others (GOE3, May 09).

The views of officials from the Ministry of Finance also revealed an element of concern, not only over a relationship based on the money that DPs provided, but also in terms of SWAp process leadership and how areas of comparative advantage were exploited. However, unlike officials from line ministries, those from the Ministry of Education, as the lead ministry in this SWAp, seemed to concentrate on a desire for the partnership to operate in line with the Paris Declaration framework. One of the latter stated that, *'The critical thing is that the Ministry [of Education] is supposed to be the lead agent, the rest of the partners in whatever way, whether they have got more money or less money, they are treated as equal'* (GOF1, May 09). For their part, what was critical was that the Paris Declaration framework should be faithfully implemented, and they wanted to see the Ministry of Education – supported by the government's line ministries in the SWAp process – take the lead as central coordinators.

The majority of government officials focused on how the funding provided by DPs tended to stifle the equality all stakeholders in the partnership were expected to enjoy. This corroborates the finding that there was a contradiction inherent in the dynamic between the SWAp process – which was expected to enhance assistance to the education sector and contribute to effective aid delivery according to the Paris Declaration framework – and the unequal relations created due to DP funding.

The perceptions of government officials also indicated that the areas of focus, expertise or comparative advantage of each DP constituted another aspect of the power that tended to affect relations among actors in the partnership:

....the other power is obviously the expertise. During meetings, if one has got more ideas, knowledge and what have you, they are given the floor and of course they dominate; but, at the same time, you can see that knowledge is also power (GOC1, May 09).

This was also observed by another government official who expressed similar views of concern on the conflict created in the partnership by DP's areas of expertise:

In terms of power relationships, I see a lot of friction among our development partners in the SWAp arrangement. The main area of friction is priority areas; there are partners who want to indicate that the priority area...they are funding is the most important, demeaning the areas that others are supporting... People come into the SWAp with a complex, a superiority complex, and they want others to feel inferior... Again, frictions come about because of the amounts of money people pump in (GOE3, May 09).

This highlights a concern over how knowledge, expertise and areas of comparative advantage can be manipulated to influence relations amongst actors by enabling or limiting the level of participation and the priorities set in the partnership.

Additionally, government officials described the partnership in terms of the policy and strategy agendas different DPs brought to the development process, which also tended to affect relations (a perspective that was highlighted by some DPs as well). Some DPs seemed to be fixated on the fulfilment of their agendas, attempting to control interactions within the partnership in a bid to ensure that their priorities took precedence over those of the government. One government official put it as follows:

The government itself, through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, has defined its development agenda and, to a great extent, that has helped us. But there are times when you might see one development partner trying to move in a particular direction, trying to push forward its agenda, which may not be within government's agenda for that particular year (GOE2, May 09).

Another government official also expressed his opinion on the agenda DPs brought to the SWAp process, indicating the need to exercise discretion and diplomacy when dealing with them:

It is obvious that you have characters that are strong headed; you have situations where somebody has definitely come with an agenda; but, to me, the agenda should be seen as like water put in [a] plastic bag, and should be able to change its shape and fit into the other. Yes, indeed, there have been scenarios where people have tried to dictate (GOE4, May 09).

This government official went on to clarify a certain aspect of the DP agenda that affected relations in tending to confine support to basic education, citing an example in which the donor's priority was not the same as that of the state:

A good example is the way we are probably seen from the perspective of a donor in terms of interventions at basic education level. They want us to pump in so much, but we are also saying that as a nation, we need to train people; we need to move people up the ladder. Malawi wasn't meant to be...only having basic education... [However,] they might be saying that basic education is a very important agenda (GOE4, May 09).

The Paris Declaration framework discourages the unilateral setting of the agenda by DPs; yet they tend to continue to advance their own priorities, an attitude that questions their integrity in terms of alignment with the declaration to which they are signatories. A DP's agenda should be sufficiently flexible to allow compliance with the recipient government's agenda. This recommendation tends to affirm a similar observation made earlier in this thesis whereby DPs' mandates and systems have not yet demonstrated adaptation to the Paris Declaration.

CSO and NGO members highlighted three main areas that were affected by relations in the SWAp partnership – funding, leadership, and technical expertise or comparative advantage – which are in the main consistent with those identified by the DPs and government officials cited above. However, CSOs/NGOs also systematically examined the relationship from four different angles. The first was the general picture of the whole partnership; the second was relations between the government and the DPs/donors; the third was relations between the government and CSOs/NGOs; and the fourth was relations between DPs/donors and CSOs/NGOs. However, CSOs/NGOs tended to concentrate on their expectations of the role they played in the partnership, as demonstrated by the following extracts.

One CSO member described the general picture of the partnership as one of '*...mutual respect and orderliness*' (CS1, June 09); and another described relations as generally '*...positive because everybody wants to assist with the process*' (CS2, May 09). A third CSO member looked at the general relationship with regard to the procedures that were intended to guide actors' interactions '*...in terms of how they are going to be seen to be respecting each other's ideologies because they come from different backgrounds*'

(CS3, May 09). These views seem to portray a picture of expected norms in the interaction of actors in any partnership.

One CSO member described relations between the government and the DPs, indicating that, *'There is a strong relationship between government and donors mainly because government looks...to the donors for the financial and technical muscle that they have'* (CS1, June 09). This view supports those held by both government officials and DPs, but also hints at conflict between the two actors; a viewpoint that another CSO member corroborated: *'The major problem between government and development partners is an issue of money'* (CS2, May 09).

CSO members also described relations between the government and civil society as weak and one that was viewed with suspicion, one of them indicating that:

The relationship between government and NGOs is a bit loose and weak. Government is suspecting NGOs as troublemakers or agents of opposition political parties. Although this is [can be] the case, the relationship has been growing for the better following the SWAp processes (CS1, June 09).

Another CSO member expressed similar views:

The relationship generally between government and those of us in the civil society is still characterized by some sort of suspicion. Suspicion because maybe...it is a bit tense because sometimes you could be saying the truth as a civil society representative about something that is not working, and those in government...they may not want to say 'yes' because they are afraid of repercussions (CS2, May 09).

This CSO member also expressed caution: *'...but we should also be mindful that we are working in a relationship where one is a government and the other are considered as those who are governed'* (CS2, May 09); but further elaborated on the different approaches adopted by government officials and CSO members in their interactions:

There is I think a professional difference – those of us who are in civil society have nothing to lose to tell [in telling] a government official, 'You are not working here; there is a problem here,' when those in the government feel they have everything to lose when they accept they are not doing things well (CS2, May 09).

From a governance point of view, it seems that both government officials and CSO members were subject to government authority; it was just that CSO members were not employed or remunerated by the state, whereas civil servants were. This could be the main reason why government officials needed to proceed with caution when it came to criticizing the government – because they were part of the state system – although there was at times room to separate an individual from the general system.

An interesting point about the Malawian context is that it reveals some deviation in relation to the current widely held global notion that the role of the state as the primary development actor is increasingly being challenged by other major actors, such as the market and civil society (Malhotra, n.d.). The impact is very limited in the case of Malawian civil society, and thus restricts its participation and equality with other actors in the education SWAp process.

This also reveals that although civil society recognizes its new role under the global agenda and is rightfully striving to play its part, it also acknowledges some limitations to the fulfilment of this role due to its relationship with a government that has the upper hand. This entails some restraint on the part of civil society in performing its function because the government seems to be very suspicious of the motives and activities of CSOs. Nevertheless, this could be regarded as conferring a certain balance, a notion that is corroborated by Sending and Neumann (2006, p.651):

In this perspective, the role of non-state actors in shaping and carrying out global governance functions is not an expression of a changing logic or rationality of government (defined as a type of power) by which civil society is redefined from a passive object of government to be acted upon with an entity that is both an object and subject of government.

Another CSO member expressed a similar view, pointing out that the lack of knowledge among government officials also affected interactions and relations between actors in the SWAp process, which allowed DPs and their external consultants to take an upper hand due to their knowledge of the country:

It is quite embarrassing to find that external consultants or external people are coming here in the name of development partners to be telling us what we should be doing; even telling us what our data is saying and what we should do. This puts people in government in an awkward position where they are not able to defend the policies and they are not able to clarify where we should go... There is a problem, but I don't know whether it's lack of capacity in the government offices (CS2, May 09).

Thus, this issue not only affected relations in the SWAp partnership, but also reflects the serious capacity issue that was identified in Chapter Five.

In conclusion, the way in which the SWAp partnership was conducted meant that relations between the government and DPs/donors tended to be influenced by various factors. DP funding to the government affected leadership and trust. Relations were also adversely affected by DPs' exploitation of their expertise and areas of comparative advantage, which were used to control the decision-making process. The DP agenda was yet another area that was found to affect the relationship, as it could conflict with government priorities. Since the SWAp was designed to enhance sector resources, neither education funding nor DP expertise should have had a negative impact on relations in the partnership. Indeed, it was the government that was supposed to take the lead and determine its agenda priorities in this process.

Thus, practice based on relations in this SWAp process does not seem to have been consistent with the Paris Declaration framework. This suggests that in order to improve relations in the education SWAp partnership and beyond, it is necessary to reconceptualize the whole SWAp partnership through a process of critical reflection and encouragement of DP willingness to engage in such a forum.

6.2. Different Actors' Roles in the Education SWAp Partnership

Different roles were played by the various actors in the education SWAp partnership; and interviews conducted for this study shed light on the nature of these roles and by whom they were played. The majority of DPs perceived the roles in the partnership according to the same basic pattern with which they identified the relationship as

principally divided between DPs and the government. Very little was said about the role of CSOs or NGOs, in spite of the fact that DPs had identified the need to broaden the partnership to include other actors who could play some crucial roles. The DPs also enumerated several roles played by different actors in the partnership, which included leadership, coordination, financial support, technical support, and capacity development, including the provision of technical assistance and consultancy in specific areas. The DPs also described the roles played by different actors based on their mandates and areas of comparative advantage.

In terms of key roles, DPs consistently identified the two major actors in the partnership, themselves and the government, two DPs independently stating:

...we need to categorize the partnership between the development partners on one end and the government on the other. There are expectations from each side that the government should lead the SWAp process, and that the role of development partners is that of facilitators of the development process. We need to facilitate in terms of our technical knowledge – the expertise we have on education – and this is something that we can provide to government because the government has capacity problems in so many different areas (DP2, June 10).

Roles were as evidenced by the current activities, principally divided into that of the DPs as a whole and that of Government of Malawi; Government of Malawi taking the principal lead and the DPs supporting in both technical and financial areas. Government of Malawi is expected to provide the human resources and the logistical support (DP4, January 09).

Other than identification of the two major actors in the partnership when ascribing roles, these DPs' views also highlight the distinct leadership role that was expected to be played by the government, which was in accordance with the Paris Declaration framework. Three DPs voiced similar stands on leadership: 'Government plays the leadership role' (DP3, Oct. 10); 'Well, of course, the overall driver of the process is the Ministry of Education' (DPM3, May 09); and 'In a SWAp, government takes control' (DP1, Jan. 09).

However, other DPs revealed different perspectives on leadership based on realities on the ground. One of their number pointed out that, 'The government is supposed to lead and own the process, but we have seen capacity limitations on the government side, so

we are developing the SWAp; it is the question of both government and DPs leading in certain aspects' (DP2, June 10). Another DP said, *'I can say that the whole SWAp process really is a process that is driven by development partners; otherwise, if it was government initiative, this should have started a long time ago' (DPM5, May 09).* The views of another DP indicated a similar opinion:

It is my view that the government for a long time did not take the leadership that was expected of it in moving both the NESP and the SWAp process forward. This created a vacuum which the development partners filled, and this was not necessarily good for the process (DPM1, June 09).

Another interesting revelation is that only one DP expressed views that recognized that the role of the government was to identify sector priorities and set the policy agenda. This DP asserted that, *'The government is there to set policy – that is their role; the government is there to develop plans; the government is there to provide the resources necessary' (DP2, June 10).*

From these views, it seems that although the Ministry of Education was expected to take the lead in the education SWAp process, it did not take full responsibility for leadership. This situation raises questions about the legitimacy of the ownership of the development process, and further asks whose agenda and priorities were reflected in the NESP as the main education SWAp policy document. Nevertheless, the government had been identified as lacking in expertise and capacity, a situation the DPs exploited to facilitate the SWAp process, including the appropriation of the technical working groups (TWGs) that the government chaired.

Another DP standpoint highlighted two views that were commonly shared amongst the majority of them on their role in funding and the provision of technical expertise: *'Development partners play a different role, they play the role to help support the government not only financially, but improving the whole system' (DP3, Oct. 10).* Another DP spoke of *'...DPs supporting in both technical and financial areas' (DP4, Jan. 09).*

The negative aspects of funding in connection with relations in the education SWAp partnership notwithstanding, as pointed out by many actors, such aid provision still

stood out as a major role that DPs were expected to play. In addition to funding, technical support to the government was another area that DPs recognized as their role. Yet, while technical support might seem easier for the government to regulate, funding remained a delicate issue because of the influence and power relations it generated (a point that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8). However, it is important to note that in order to address the conflict created by increased funding and the resultant position of influence, DPs were duty bound to conform to the requirements of the Paris Declaration.

Another common perspective DPs revealed was their role in providing support to the government based on their areas of expertise or comparative advantage, a standpoint that is consistent with that identified when defining the partnership. Views of DPs on this aspect show that they valued operating in their areas of expertise or comparative advantage, which was important not only to them but also to the government in order to avoid the duplication of efforts and enable the latter to determine and fill the gaps. Two DPs further expressed their views on areas of expertise or comparative advantage, independently pointing out that:

In this partnership, their roles depend on what sort of niche they have within [the] NESP – that is one aspect; but also, when you look at [the]NESP and capacity building of the ministry, various partners, too, have different roles in terms of...the level of...implementation (DPM5, May 09).

Usually, every donor or development partner will have a bench [position] within the entire continuum of the sector, so that is how we are kind of constituted to define our roles... I did not touch on the issue of avoiding duplication; if those roles are not observed there is high possibility of double-crossing [duplication] of activities leading into confusion (DPM2, May 09).

The opinions of DPs on the function of CSOs and NGOs in the education SWAp process were not precise enough to determine the role that this group of actors was envisaged as playing in the partnership. Their role was described in relation to other factors, which suggests that it had not yet been fully assimilated, acknowledged or appreciated. Such DP perceptions are clearly reflected in the following statements:

There is need to realize that the civil society organizations as a whole are part of the partnership. There is partnership between DPs and civil society which is beneficial to the project mode and when left out can pose a challenge. SWAp

brought them on board to strengthen the civil society advocacy and mobilization on how to implement SWAp Roles – we sometimes focus on government and DPs and forget civil society – for example, to work together on M&E⁵ (DP1, Jan. 09).

I think one important role of the civil society is to be of course critical to [of] the education sector; but critical in a creative, positive way, but not just in a negative way to criticize the sector. They should also be critical on [of] the budget. For instance, I know that they do that – and I appreciate that very much – and they do an analysis of the budget after it has been presented to Parliament... So, I think they play a key role (DP3, Oct. 10).

Another example is on advancing the agenda emanating from UNESCO⁶ – everybody has [the] same knowledge and information. For example, civil society are even more knowledgeable and can advance agendas without difficulties; and [are] effective in following up on recommendations from international meetings (DPM3, Jan. 09).

The role of CSOs and NGOs was not recognized by DPs as one of those played by the main actors, such as the government or themselves, but as a secondary function. The CSO/NGO role was identified with the watchdog task of monitoring and ensuring accountability, and with that of representing the interests of the community at large in undertaking advocacy and mobilization, but not playing a major role in setting the development agenda. Another element to the definition of the role of civil society in the partnership was that it tended to be prescriptive, which left it little room to act independently.

Contrary to the views of the majority of DPs, most government officials identified the setting of the agenda as one of the major roles of the government. On the other hand, government officials tended to agree with DPs on the provision of financial support and leadership. However, this seems to have been a point of contention dependent on other variables that came into play in the partnership, which, in turn, affected the role of setting the national agenda.

According to the 2005 Paris Declaration, the role of setting priorities on the development agenda is assigned to aid recipient governments (Hyden, 2008); a function that the government officials in this study were clearly aware of, one of their number

⁵ Monitoring and evaluation.

⁶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

stating, *'I think, on the roles, mostly government is to set the agenda and then carry out the activities'* (GOE1, May 09). Another official said, *'I think the first thing which you have to see coming from the ministry is that of setting the agenda, being the lead agent, and showing that ownership is by Malawians'* (GOE4, May 09). Another government official expressed this notion through the example of an overarching policy document that broadly determined the government agenda: *'The government itself through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy has defined its development agenda and, to a great extent, that has helped us'* (GOE2, May 09).

Government officials seemed to emphasize the point that setting the agenda was at the heart of the government, and prioritizing its development agenda without much outside interference was expected in the education SWAp process. As discussed earlier under relationships, the intervention of DPs on this particular issue was not very welcome, but nevertheless tended to prove successful under duress of responding to the financial support of the DPs. Thus, international development aid being provided under certain conditions that forced DP representatives to pursue them through influencing priorities in policy and strategy documents can be seen to perpetuate the tying of aid to these conditions; a practice that contravenes current protocol in international development aid (The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005).

Government officials also identified leadership as another role of the government, but there were some elements of uncertainty about this, as expressed by one official who stated that, *'Personally, I take it that the ministry is taking the lead and this leadership has also been delegated to the Directorate of Planning'* (GOE1, May 09). Another government official said:

Holding all factors constant, the leadership is supposed to be by the ministry and the office for [of the] Secretary for Education... However, because of the influence some of the donors have, using their clout in terms of amounts of money they inject into the SWAp, you find that leadership is being taken by such donors (GOE3, May 09).

In expressing similar views on leadership, another government official noted, *'I think leadership, basically to us, is through [the] Ministry of Education'* (GOC1, May 09). Another said, *'The leadership role, the way I see it myself, is that it should be taken by*

the Ministry of Education and the others supporting the ministry's agenda' (GOE5, May 09). Another government official remarked, 'All the mechanisms are there as one way of ensuring that there is proper coordination, although the overall leadership is supposed to rest with government' (GOE2, May 09).

There were two other areas that the majority of government officials focused on, which were those of providing financial support and technical expertise to the government. These were unanimously identified as roles of DPs in the education SWAp partnership, a viewpoint that accords with that of the DPs themselves. Indeed, there seem to have been no conflicting standpoints to such a perception, as clearly articulated by one government official, in that *'mostly, development partners are there to fund [and] provide technical expertise' (GOE1, May 09)*. Another government official commented, *'the partner is there to complement, to support, be it financial, be it technical, and even moral' (GOE4, May 09)*. In agreeing with this view, another government official stated that, *'The development partners give budget support and they also give technical assistance and policy advice' (GOF2, May 09)*. All these perceptions tend to confirm that these DP roles were widely accepted by both actors.

However, as was observed earlier in terms of both government officials and DPs, financial support and technical expertise could also become potential sources of conflict in terms of influence over the partnership. Such conflict over the amount of funding in particular was not compatible with the conceptual understanding of a SWAp.

There were a few isolated perceptions of the CSO/NGO function on the part of government officials that basically accentuated the identified role of monitor, one official remarking that, *'They are typical watchdogs; they are there to ascertain that certain things are being done accordingly and therefore they inform both of us' (GOE4, May 09)*. Another government official also pointed out that, *'The civil society plays the oversight role – they are like watchdogs – they will alert you on issues that require redress and make a lot of noise; so that becomes an indicator that in one particular area we are not doing well' (GOF2, May 09)*.

Another government official expressed views on the role of CSOs and NGOs in line with the watchdog position, explaining that:

Civil society will also offer some checks in the implementation of these particular programmes, but also looks at – as of late – into the performance of various aspects of education: relevant capacity, but also quality and how these programmes are being implemented. So, it's important that we have different stakeholders for checks and balances (GOF1, May 09).

In keeping with the requirements of its global governance function (Sending and Neumann, 2006), the role of civil society seems to have been well recognized by officials from the Ministry of Finance, as the central coordinating body that was intended to guide all sectors in the operationalization of a SWAp as a new aid modality. However, similar to the DPs that did not seem to give prominence to the CSO/NGO role, the majority of government officials failed to focus very much on the role of civil society and, certainly, no indication was given that it was on a par with other actors in the partnership. Moreover, although there was a common realization among officials that the government was supposed to take the lead, their remarks tended to reveal that this role was not well actualized in spite of an ardent desire to achieve overall control of the SWAp process. Indeed, contrary to the Paris Declaration framework, the leadership role in this partnership did not reflect international SWAp ideals.

The CSOs and NGOs also expressed their views on the various roles played in this process, which were largely in agreement with the perceptions of DPs. Thus, CSOs and NGOs identified the role of the DPs as that of providing financial and technical expertise, but believed that the role of leadership lay with the government, although they did not necessarily consider this the case in practice. One CSO member confirmed that ‘...donors offer financial and technical assistance’ (CS1, June 09). Two others independently highlighted views on leadership and technical support:

There is an understanding that the leadership role is expected to be done by the government through [the] Ministry of Education... [However], from my observation, the SWAp process has been more donor and consultant driven; government has been on the receiving end (CS1, June 09).

Although it is not always good, they [the DPs] are in the driving seat... I was privileged to read the initial draft of the NESP, but you could see the donor

language in the NESP; so they are in the forefront in shaping the agenda; although I would still like to recommend that the ministry needs to still take control and make sure that they are the ones leading the process, with the donors providing the technical support (CS3, May 09).

One CSO member identified the government and the DPs as the main players, with their own role as mere participants in the partnership and if consulted the views might not necessarily be considered:

[Our] main role is that of a participant. If I look, for example, [at] the civil society – because we still look at government and the development partners – the external development partners...[are] key players... We do not necessarily participate in the setting of the agenda. Honestly speaking, the setting of the agenda is done between [the] planning department in the ministry and the development partners, and we are consulted...we are not part of setting the agenda (CS2, May 09).

However, this standpoint seems to be contradicted by another CSO member who noted that ‘*in recent times, the civil society has also come in to influence [the] policy agenda*’ (CS3, May 09).

From the CSO and NGO perspective, it was clear that the government’s leadership role required some adjustment in order to be fully realized and a lot of work needed to be done in order to create an enabling environment beyond the Paris Declaration framework.

All actors were in agreement on the coordination role that was played by the government and the DPs, as indicated by one government official who said, ‘*There is coordination in two respects: although, overall, the coordination is supposed to come from government, but at [a] slightly lower level, there is also coordination from amongst the development partners*’ (GOE2, May 09). However, coordination was generally implemented through the TWGs in which key stakeholders and actors involved in the education SWAp partnership were represented. The government chaired while the DPs assumed the responsibility of facilitators, as indicated by the following perceptions of different actors:

The coordination of roles of different partners is done through technical working groups... Members meet to plan and monitor their activities and they are chaired by [the] MoE⁷. Policy and Planning is like the master technical working group and all DPs attend the meetings (DP1, Jan. 09).

There are technical working groups which are chaired by the ministry directors according to thematic areas... Those are chaired by the ministry directors and facilitated by DP members (DPM2, May 09).

The different stakeholders have an opportunity of attending our policy and planning committee meeting, which is an umbrella body, and from there, they have [the] opportunity of dealing with the directorate of planning as an entry and exit point... The ministry is in charge of coordination (GOE4, May 09).

The ministry takes the lead and the development partners just facilitate. They are also part of the technical working groups...so the development partners have also distributed themselves across the technical working groups (CS2, May 09).

The perspectives of different actors on the roles of the various stakeholders in the education SWAp partnership presented diverse views that reveal some critical issues around leadership and ownership in the process. They also identified how DP financial support tended to undermine the government's role in terms of leadership and setting the agenda. In the interests of aid effectiveness, the Paris Declaration stipulates that the government should assume leadership and ownership, and set agenda priorities in a SWAp process. Again, based on the notion of a SWAp that has clear roles for each group of partners and is intended to promote a democratic partnership that facilitates increased financial support, it was expected that DPs would enhance funding to the education sector. Therefore, the monetary aid DPs provided should not have disrupted the clearly defined roles of each group of actors.

However, the evidence from the perceptions of actors has shown that in spite of identifying roles clearly, in practice, the government's leadership role was compromised not only on account of the funding DPs provided, but also because the mandates and priorities of the latter tended to compete with those of the government. The role of civil society was also prescriptive and undermined, thereby limiting its ability to fulfil its role. These revelations tend to indicate that efforts to improve international development

⁷ Ministry of Education.

aid and cooperation through the SWAp modality notwithstanding, there are still challenges based on a disparity between SWAp rhetoric and the realities on the ground.

6.3 Do Different Actors Facilitate or Hinder the Realization of the Aims of an Education SWAp Partnership?

As highlighted in Chapter Five, the views of actors in the education SWAp partnership accord with the concern that the global agreements to which many DPs and governments subscribe notwithstanding, the signing of them is not always welcomed with appropriate internal changes to the regulations, mandates and systems that would facilitate the implementation of such international declarations. The perspectives of the majority of actors in this study reveal that DPs and their governments' mandates and systems were often seen to conflict with their expected roles in the SWAp process; and, consequently, they hindered the realization of the aims of the partnership. Even where the need for innovation had been embraced, the rate at which DPs mandates and systems changed was observed to be far too slow to facilitate effective realization of the aims of the SWAp process.

Some perceptions of DPs on this issue are as follows:

Each DP has [a] legal framework/mandate which can either facilitate or become a challenge to the SWAp process. For example, Agency DPM5 has reviewed internal systems to suit the SWAp requirements. DPs have to look at their systems, whether they facilitate or hinder the SWAp process. The way [the] SWAp has been developed allows for those who will not be able to pull funds – for example, Agency DP5 and Agency DP2 – to still participate. Whether financial or legal, these systems allow/facilitate [the] SWAp (DP1, Jan. 09).

I think it is important here to say that and this is what I have experienced not only here in Malawi, but in...32 years in Africa – and I worked for Agency DPM2 before. We have to realize that there is a limit to how much we can align the way we work because we all have obligations to duty headquarters; that every organization has its own agenda to some extent (DP3, Oct. 10).

Because of divergent interests, we all know that we have one ultimate goal of achieving Education for All; but if you go to a level lower than that, we may see that the interests may differ. Not necessarily differ in the sense of trying to pull

each other apart, but in the sense...[of] the focuses that are maybe mandated by our head office (DP2, June 10).

This was not only a concern to bilateral DPs, but equally affected multilateral DPs:

I am using my experience from the SWAp in the health sector. You find that the development partners would agree to move into [a] SWAp arrangement, but internally, their own mechanisms, they have not really augmented these...to fit with the needs and the operations of a SWAp (DPM2, May 09).

We have very rigid funding modalities where we need to be accountable to those that give us money. Although we are participating in the SWAp...there are times when some decisions are not in conformity with our financial rules and regulations...but luckily for us, the decision to participate in SWAps came from the headquarters. So, there are likely to be some changes within the financial rules (DPM5, May 09).

From the foregoing perspectives, it may be observed that DP mandates and internal systems restricted the way these donors operated, which could adversely affect the partnership, thereby limiting the realization of SWAp goals. This further poses a big question in terms of whether the process was realizing the main principle that the SWAp partnership was central to the success of the undertaking, as stipulated by Buchert (2002) and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).

It was also probable that the readiness and rate with which DPs adjusted to the demands of the SWAp partnership were dictated by their initial interest as organizations in engagement in such a modality. The multilateral DPs tended to be more flexible and introduced changes because the partnership presented them with a wonderful opportunity to carry on operating according to the mainstream framework of the development agenda (Riddell et al., 2000), whereby they were able to continue to influence the MPRS, EFA targets and MGDs. For example, UNICEF viewed the education SWAp partnership as an exceptional opportunity to ensure the realization of children's rights and needs (UN Economic and Social Council, 2003).

While DPs explicitly highlighted the limitations they experienced due to their governments' mandates and systems, which were slow to adjust to SWAp requirements, the views of government officials were more concerned with DPs driving and

influencing the agenda, or NESP priorities intended to ensure that DPs operated in accordance with their respective mandates. This affected the leadership role the government was expected to play as well as relations between the various actors in the SWAp process.

Similarly to the DPs, CSO and NGO members were also able to distinctly express how the mandates and systems of the former tended to hinder the realization of the aims of the education SWAp partnership, two CSO members independently stating that:

Development partners have not aligned and committed themselves to some terms of partnerships. For instance, the 2007 MGDS Review for Education noted that some donors' central policies do not allow them to commit themselves into joint agreements with fellow partners in development; thereby prolonging unilateral or bilateral agreements and implementation respectively, for example, Agency DP2 and Agency DP5. (CS1, June 09).

The way they are behaving initially, you see that while they all do understand that they need to have a common basket...you still see that Agency DP2 says, 'No, no, we will still protect this portion of ours;' Agency DP5 says 'No, no, the common basket is not our take.' So, yes, they have still [a] common understanding of [a] common approach, but they still maintain their own ideologies (CS3, May 09).

Another observation on mandates and systems being slow to change was that – apart from affecting the realization of the aims of the entire education partnership – they also seemed to broadly affect individual actors in the DP group who consistently faced challenges in the performance of their roles in the partnership:

Within rules and areas of focus of DP support, there is a conflict with what operates on the ground... At [a] broader level...education specialists are confined to what their institution says is their mandate, and yet one can find that if we do it that way, it will not have more impact (DP1, Jan. 09).

Maybe I want things to move in one way, but perhaps the 'B' headquarters, or the Ministry of Development, or the 'B' Development Bank has [a] totally different agenda. Definitely, we see that you observe the Ministry from 'B' sometimes has other ways of imposing things on us to do, which is contradicting to what the sector is doing (DP3, Oct.10).

Therefore, while individuals representing DP governments and their respective mandates might have held different views, they were seen to be helpless in terms of

instituting changes that would facilitate the realization of goals in the education SWAp process. Apart from upholding the mandates and adhering to their internal systems, these individuals were confronted with realities on the ground, where they failed to respond according to the situation because of these very mandates and systems; and this tended to cause a lot of frustration amongst the DPs.

If this situation goes unchecked, there is a danger that these DPs will succumb to a sense of ineffectiveness and frustration, particularly as they operate in a competitive environment in which those that are constrained by their mandates and systems tend to be less recognized. This can have an effect on the general performance of the individual and, ultimately, the agency.

6.4 Conclusion

This Chapter has highlighted several important issues pertaining to relations and roles amongst the different actors in this education SWAp partnership. Although the DPs were largely in favour of unity between their agencies so that they might provide effective support to the government, elements of mistrust and an aspect of covert competition amongst them seem to have existed. Such a stance can be concluded from their perceptions of a SWAp for which they were expected to become less accountable as the government assumed the lead role in a context of closer interagency collaboration (Riddell et al., 2000). However, this aspiration seems to have been overtaken by a quest to fulfil their individual government agendas, an aspect that created a spirit of competitiveness. Unity was also challenged in part by this competition, as some DPs did not adhere to their areas of comparative advantage or expertise.

The Paris Declaration demands that the recipient government sets the agenda according to its own priorities; therefore, if DPs take the lead in this respect, it is construed as contravening the principles of the declaration. This questions the DPs' integrity in the Malawian context in terms of their willingness and readiness to modify their actions and conform to the Paris Declaration to which they were signatories, the common understanding being that funding provided by DPs was expected to enhance the performance of the sector.

Frequent changes in leadership at the Ministry of Education have been identified as a factor contributing to the hindrance of progress in its SWAp process. Arguably, this affected the leadership and ownership of the process that the government was expected to assume, and might have given some DPs the opportunity to perpetuate the undermining of the government's role in the SWAp partnership. This echoes Courtney's (2007) findings based on his experience of the Cambodia education SWAp, which highlight the complex nature of relationships and the difficulty that is encountered in specifying appropriate conduct in a partnership. This further suggests that it requires more than a clear set of prescribed guidelines to regulate the behaviour of actors in such a partnership (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999), particularly so as actors in the SWAp under study had a code of conduct. This demands the reconceptualization of the whole SWAp partnership, taking into consideration all the dynamics of the relationship.

Although expected to constitute one of the main actors in the SWAp partnership, civil society was rarely viewed as part of the main relationship, which seemed to exist between or concentrate on the DPs and the government only. No interviewee was able to come up with an adequate description of relations between civil society and the other actors in the partnership other than the notion that it was confined to the role of watchdog. In the absence of adequate relations that might facilitate a meaningful system of checks and balances, this naturally becomes an area of concern, especially given the critical nature of a role that should be concerned with monitoring and supervision. Although civil society recognized its new role in the education SWAp partnership and was willing to play it, there were limitations to its ability to do so. This was due in the main to its relations with a government that tended to constrain it, as corroborated by Sending and Neumann (2006) in respect of the relationship between the government and civil society in Tanzania.

All actors acknowledged that, in order to avoid the duplication of efforts, it was necessary for a clear definition of the roles to be played by each based on their areas of expertise or comparative advantage. This would also help identify gaps and ensure that all areas in need of support were covered. The two main roles identified for DPs in general were funding provision and technical support to the government, although it

was highlighted that the former tended to cause problems around power relations. Yet, as long as those who donate the most fail to conform to the requirements of the Paris Declaration, the situation is bound to continue. This further confirms the notion that power acquired through funding to a sector will conflict with the roles expected of each actor in the process.

There were a number of issues around the duties of the government in this SWAp. The role of the government was generally to provide financial support and leadership, and set the agenda, the latter of which included the identification of priority areas. According to the government, these tasks were not fully realized due to pressure from DPs that provided financial support, in spite of the fact that the Paris Declaration clearly assigns these roles to the recipient government. These issues become critical not only in terms of attaining leadership and ownership of the education SWAp process, but also with regard to the aid effectiveness that the Paris Declaration framework emphasizes (Hyden, 2008). This element also stresses the challenges of the SWAp modality and underscores a disparity between the SWAp rhetoric and the realities on the ground.

The role of CSOs/NGOs in the education SWAp was not clearly spelled out beyond their broad watchdog function. However, in some ways, their role was prescriptive, leaving little room for them to act effectively. Thus, the function of civil society in this process does not appear to have been fully assimilated or acknowledged; indeed, it seems to have been something of a peripheral role compared to those of other actors.

It has been noted that DP government mandates and internal organizational systems restricted their functioning in the SWAp process. In a sense, this tended to create some conflict with their role as DPs. Indeed, the evidence has shown that even though DPs might have attempted to embrace the innovations necessitated by a SWAp, their internal systems were too slow to change and adapt to the requirements of the modality. Another aspect that was highlighted in the main by the government was that DP mandates and internal systems tended to cause conflict around the setting of national priorities in the process, as DPs were regarded as attempting to influence the NESP agenda to bring it in line with their respective government policies.

These revelations pose the fundamental question of whether DP governments are genuinely subscribing to the SWAp and the Paris Declaration. There are also cases in which individuals representing DPs hold different views on the conduct of a SWAp to those of their governments. In both instances, individuals representing DP governments find the resultant situation restraining and frustrating, particularly when operating in a competitive environment in which those who are flexible enough to respond to the demands of the sector are well recognized. This could have a negative impact on the general performance of individuals, their agencies, and the entire SWAp process.

Chapter 7

Enhancing Funding to the Sector

7.0 Introduction

The SWAp is seen as a vital strategy in achieving partnership and coordination for the effective delivery of international aid (Buchert, 2002; Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005). Partnership is a central issue in this thesis as the main research question asks how it influences the Malawian education SWAp process. Establishing the manner in which this SWAp partnership operated and enhanced funding to the sector is thus crucial. Therefore, in examining the results of a survey and quantitative data collected in a trend analysis of DP funding over seven years, this chapter explores how the SWAp partnership influenced education funding.

The first section discusses how the SWAp partnership influenced and improved funding to the sector. The second section examines how the SWAp partnership affected coordination and considers government administration in the SWAp process. The third section discusses the financial mechanisms employed, and assesses the extent to which they improved funding to the sector. The fourth section addresses various other aspects of the SWAp partnership and examines how they affected participation, funding and related issues. Drawing on the findings of the preceding discussion, the last section provides an analytical conclusion in relation to the concept of this modality as a strategy for achieving partnership and coordination for effective aid delivery, with particular focus on how the education SWAp partnership improved funding to the sector.

7.1 The SWAp Partnership and Funding to the Sector

In order to gain an insight into DP funding, it is necessary to look at the trend since the inception of the NESP and ascertain how the SWAp process has influenced funding to the sector. In Malawi, education is the fourth largest aid recipient sector, and is supported by 14 DPs/donors across 33 projects (Government of Malawi, 2010). After

many years of experience with the project approach and realizing the benefits of a SWAp, in cooperation with its DPs, the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology proceeded to move towards the implementation of this innovative modality. Government views on the SWAp at this time were clearly articulated in the initial version of the NESP document:

A sector-wide approach (SWAp) is an approach to service delivery that brings government and partners together in a manner which promotes national ownership, alignment of sector objectives, coherence of financing, and harmonization of procedures. [The] MoEST perceives a SWAp as providing a solution to problematic issues arising from a traditional project approach (NESP, 2006, p.6).

As noted in Chapter 5, one of the factors regarded as contributing to the effectiveness of the education SWAp was funding, although the significance of this was in a sense tempered due to the power relations experienced in relation to DPs who donated more money. Therefore, most identified shortcomings were related to the need for improvement in funding procedures. It may be argued that this was largely due to the failure to effect a swift transition from the project approach to a SWAp during the PIF period up to the implementation of the NESP. Table 7.1 below provides a summary of the trend in the disbursement of funds to the education sector by DP from 2004 to 2010.

Table 7.1: Aid disbursement to the Malawian education sector by DP/donor from 2004 to 2010 (in US dollars)

DP/donor	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
ADB	778,818	4,639,096	7,300,514	2,625,106	2,356,221	7,538,039	4,184,043
Canada	496,584	2,266,991	1,200,893	3,590,389	5,558,990	7,519,946	1,457,462
DFID	3,923,761	7,415,359	7875,309	9,942,780	17,992,995	13,493,031	14,988,196
EU	-	-	-	-	124,230	-	-
GTZ	1,340,490	1,963,364	3,431,079	1,964,374	4,627,535	4,084,710	946,766
ICEIDA	-	-	-	-	387,929	25,419	-
Ireland	-	-	-	-	413,607	372,760	-
Japan	181,979	395,191	208,008	97,817	556,530	3,799,701	1,803,151
KFW	219,407	376,700	3,392,973	1,081,351	1,759,171	306,306	-
Norway	-	607,655	477,855	375,799	728,436	295,360	-
UNFPA	-	-	-	53,146	25,702	-	-
UNICEF	-	-	2,520,974	1,131,044	2,237,923	-	2,993,085
UNESCO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USAID	8,421,010	-	-	-	7,415,193	7,348,159	3,836,090
WB	-	4,964,000	-	3,626,000	-	-	-
WFP	15,362,048	27,652,026	31,896,224	27,662,607	62,084,764	61,553,058	38,925,059

Source: Adapted by the author from Ministry of Education planning data

Based on actual aid disbursement patterns as opposed to projected figures, the general trend is that most of these donors provided far less than they had projected at the start of projects. Some clear examples where donors failed to honour actual commitments include the following:

- UNICEF only disbursed \$1,131,044 but had made an actual commitment of \$27,723,600 in 2007
- WB only disbursed \$4,964,000 but had made an actual commitment of \$32,200,000
- UNESCO committed to donating \$1,300,000 in 2009 and \$49,000 in 2010 but nothing was forthcoming
- ICEIDA committed to donating \$4,088,432 in 2005 but no aid was disbursed in that fiscal year

There are fluctuations and inconsistencies in funding to the sector (see Table 7.1) that are consistent with this study's qualitative data analysis. DPs adjusted funding

arrangements and schedules with scant regard for the Government of Malawi or the implications for the programmes in question. Such inconsistency greatly affected the implementation of education programmes, as was the case with the PCAR, which is cited as an example in Chapter 5. These practices ran contrary to what the NESP expected of DPs in stipulating that the coherence of funding should be maintained. Indeed, the delivery of aid was intended to be planned and consistent so that the government might have greater control over policymaking and the implementation of sector programmes.

Table 7.1 also shows that in the case of some donors, initial disbursement at the initiation of a project amounted to the largest proportion of their contribution and, thereafter, funding steadily decreased over the ensuing years – USAID is one such example. Arguably, this could be attributed to DP specialization in pilot projects on the understanding that other DPs would sustain successful pilots at programme level. This further highlights the flawed conception of the project approach, which generally requires large amounts of money at the initial stage to prepare the ground for long-term implementation, after which funding is steadily reduced over the remainder of the intervention's lifetime. However, the opposite situation obtained where other DPs were concerned, their funding disbursement steadily increasing over time – typical examples include DFID and WFP – which is a more acceptable model in the SWAp context.

Over the past few years, there has been a general shift of disbursement modality from emphasis on pooled sector support (which commonly characterizes a SWAp) to general budget support. Although the latter predisposes aid to address the effects of political fluctuation more than the former, both types of aid disbursement are acceptable in a SWAp, although the preferred modality seems to be pooled funds to a sector. In Malawi, only a few DPs and donors such as the European Union (EU), Department for International Development (DFID), German Development Cooperation (GDC), African Development Bank (ADB) and Norway have donated funding through both budget support and projects, other DPs/donors providing assistance through projects alone (Boyle et al., 2008).

In terms of the utilization of government systems when disbursing aid, none of Malawi's 14 DPs/donors makes full use of this utility, although the concept of a SWAp requires the adoption of common approaches and DP use of government disbursement procedures (Brown et al., 2001). However, a few DPs make partial use of the government system, including the EU, DFID, ADB, World Bank (WB), GDC and Norway. Table 7.2 presents information on the number of projects that were running in the education sector in the 2009/10 fiscal year and the percentage of aid funding facilitating them.

Table 7.2 Projects running in Malawi in the 2009-10 fiscal year

Organization/Country	Years	Contribution
DFID	7	33%
USAID	7	9%
Canada	3	6%
Japan	3	6%
ADB	2	17%
GDC	2	5%
UNICEF	2	7%
ICEIDA	1	<1%
Ireland	1	1%
WFP	1	8%
WB	1	8%
UNESCO	1	<1%

Source: Malawi Aid Atlas, 2010

These data corroborate findings from interviews conducted in this study in terms of two issues that were noted in Chapter 5 as areas worthy of further consideration. The first is the perception that DPs continued to operate in project mode due to a lack of trust in the government's ability to account for the money; and the second is the lack of capacity of government systems. The question is whether DP failure to utilize government disbursement procedures was an issue of capacity on the part of the government or a lack of trust in terms of financial accountability on the part of the DPs. This is an area that requires further investigation, particularly given the finding that even where government systems were considered to be well developed, DPs continued to employ their own structures (Wood et al., 2008).

The project approach has been identified as the easier option for DPs in terms of ensuring accountability as they are able to control and monitor the use of their funds closely according to interviewees. However, the SWAp is associated with issues of capacity development, including that of government systems, which the evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration recognizes as a major concern:

One of the most important obstacles to implementing the Declaration is the concern about weaknesses of capacities and systems in partner countries. This obstacle is repeatedly identified in almost all of the evaluation, even though the countries assessed here include some of those with the strongest capacities and most advanced systems among all partner countries (Wood et al., 2008, p.ix).

The report suggests that one reason for this could be that DPs still cling to some old perceptions around the issue of trust in recipient governments, which subsequently impedes the shift to a SWAp. The percentage contributions made by each DP/donor represented in Table 7.2 reveal some consistency with the observations about power relations presented in Chapter 6 and 8, whereby DPs exercised power in the SWAp process proportionate to the amount of money they donated.

Chapter 3 explained the SWAp and traced its emergence to changes in global development aid in connection with international targets, which resulted in DP countries promising to increase international aid to developing countries at the World Conference on Education for All in 2000 (King, 1992). Consequently, as this thesis has consistently emphasized, issues of funding are of central importance to aid recipient governments because a sector budget not only determines its own performance but, more importantly, how the country is progressing towards the achievement of international targets.

There is a general expectation that a SWAp will bring among other things increased funding to the sector. Data from this study's survey also provided information on how the SWAp process influenced aid to the Malawian education sector, which indicates improved funding in spite of other factors, as presented in Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: Perceptions of the degree to which the Malawian education SWAp partnership improved funding to the sector

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	16	84.2%	14	87.5%	5	100%
To some extent	3	15.8%	2	12.5%	0	0
To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

DPs were more positive than government officials about the SWAp partnership having contributed towards improved funding to the sector, with 87.5 percent and 84.2 percent respectively indicating it had improved funding to the sector to a large extent. However, the CSOs/NGOs scored the highest (although there were comparatively few of them), with unanimous agreement (100 percent) that the partnership had improved funding to the sector to a large extent.

The high absolute ratings serve to underscore the level of optimism actors shared in the education SWAp partnership in terms of its potential to improve funding. The highest percentage scores in all three categories of partners indicate that the education SWAp partnership improved funding to the sector to a large extent. No one from the three categories of partners indicated that the partnership had improved funding to the sector to no extent. Variation in scores between the three groups is small. The distribution of scores is thus on the positive side. These scores are also consistent with information obtained through the funding trend analysis above, which – a decline in funding by a few DPs that can be largely attributed to their adherence to the project approach notwithstanding – indicates that DPs steadily increased funding to the sector during the development of the NESP.

Another area of significant impact on this SWAp process was partnership relations, as observed in chapters 5, 6 and 8, principally in Chapter 8. Data from the survey show that this aspect affected both DPs and government officials. This emphasizes the role of

relationships in the SWAp partnership, and power relations in particular. Table 7.4 below provides information on how relations between different actors affected funding to the sector.

Table 7.4: Perceptions of the degree to which partnership relations affect funding to the Malawian education sector

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	18	94.7%	14	87.5%	4	80.0%
To some extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	1	20.0%
To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

It is evident from the data presented in Table 7.4 that all three groups of actors were concerned about partnership relations and the role they had in affecting funding to the sector. The vast majority of actors returned the highest rating (to a large extent), thus demonstrating unanimity that partnership relations affect funding and could hinder effective mobilization of funds to the sector. The government scored the highest (94.7 percent), with DPs second (87.5 percent) and CSOs/NGOs third (80 percent).

Qualitative data also highlight the power relations factor in the education SWAp partnership, which created an imbalance in participation and affected partner relationships negatively. As previously identified, power relations affected actors' participation in the SWAp partnership decision-making process. Consequently, the study found that such a dynamic potentially jeopardized efforts to enhance funding to the sector and improve aid effectiveness.

Data collected through the survey also provide more information on the extent to which the principles and pattern of the education SWAp partnership influenced funding to the sector (see Appendix D). With regard to the first aspect, CSOs/NGOs returned the

highest score, with 100 percent indicating that principles applied at various stages of the SWAp process affected funding to the sector to a large extent. DPs scores revealed a proportion of 81.3 percent and government officials 63.2 percent.

In terms of the second aspect, government officials scored the highest, with 89.5 percent indicating that the pattern of the SWAp partnership influenced funding to the sector to a large extent. The DPs' score was 75 percent, and CSOs/NGOs scored the lowest at 40 percent. Comparatively, government officials' scores indicate that they were more concerned with the pattern of the partnership than its principles, believing that the former could affect funding to the sector more than the latter. However, generally, the scores reveal that both aspects affected the flow of funding.

The above data analysis shows that the manner in which a SWAp partnership is conducted affects funding to the sector. From this evidence, it is clear that there are still issues that need to be addressed in the Malawian education SWAp partnership before it can begin to contribute significantly towards improving funding to the sector. Based on this evidence, hindrance to the enhancement of funding to the education sector caused by these factors could account for Malawi's failure to meet international targets in terms of both EFA and the MDGs.

7.2 The Coordination Role of the SWAp Partnership

A SWAp has also been identified as a modality for achieving aid coordination for effective delivery of international aid, and sector policies and strategies. Within this framework, the emphasis is on effective collaboration at all levels and developing relationships that contribute to meaningful partnerships. In independent studies of SWAps in Burkina Faso and Uganda, Samoff (2004) and Murphy (2005) respectively emphasize the need to achieve coordination and ownership in a SWAp process. Thus, a SWAp partnership should pay particular attention to coordination, which will in turn contribute to effective aid delivery. Accordingly, tables 7.5 and 7.6 present data on how the coordination of this education SWAp partnership was affected.

Table 7.5: Perceptions of the degree to which Malawian education SWAp partnership relations affect aid coordination

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	17	89.5%	12	75.0%	4	80.0%
To some extent	2	10.5%	4	25.0%	1	20.0%
To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

In terms of the perception that partnership relationships affect coordination to a large extent, government officials score highest (89.5 percent); CSOs/NGOs come second (80 percent); while DPs are third (75 percent). These data show that the three groups were unanimous in their view that partnership relations were affected by aid coordination in this SWAp partnership. Chapter 6 highlighted a similar concern about relations that affected coordination meetings because of skewed participation, mainly caused by the conduct of some DPs who donated more money to the government than others did.

However, there are interesting results in respect of responses concerning the extent to which the government coordinated the education SWAp process, as presented in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6: Perceptions of the degree to which government coordinates the education SWAp process

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	13	68.4%	12	75.0%	3	60.0%
To some extent	6	31.6%	3	18.8%	2	40.0%
To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

Although all three groups of partners agreed that the government coordinated the education SWAp process to a large extent, the scores are proportionately lower when compared to those on other factors that affected funding to the sector. In terms of perceived government coordination, DPs scored the highest (75 percent); government officials returned the second highest rating (68.4 percent); and CSOs/NGOs scored 60 percent. Thus, it may be inferred that these scores in fact reveal an element of weak government coordination, an area that is closely linked to ownership and leadership in a SWAp process.

Other studies of the SWAp have also highlighted the problem of poor government coordination and ownership (Samoff, 2004; OECD, 2007), a finding that suggests there is a need to improve coordination by focusing on ways of enhancing ownership. This element of the process is perpetually challenged by issues of leadership, meaning that capacity becomes a major concern in terms of government relations with other actors in these forums. As previously observed, coordination is closely linked to ownership, capacity and leadership. Yet, government ownership and leadership in the Malawian SWAp process tended to be compromised due to competition created by DPs who donated more money than others did and thus wanted to take the lead in the SWAp partnership, as corroborated by the qualitative data discussed in the preceding two chapters.

This study's survey data (see Appendix D) also provides information on the extent to which leadership in the SWAp process influenced funding to the sector. From the scores returned, it may be seen that most actors agreed that leadership in the education SWAp partnership process influenced funding to the sector to a large extent. Indeed, the vast majority of DPs held this view (93.8 percent); the CSO/NGO score was 80 percent; and, although the government officials' score was the lowest, 73.7 percent, but they were still in agreement. The high DP score seems to be consistent with perceptions provided on leadership in Chapter 6, whereby it was indicated that frequent changes in ministry leadership impeded the SWAp process.

7.3 A Funding Mechanism vs. Funding to the Sector

The shift towards the SWAp was based on the understanding that it would be a suitable modality for funding sectors in developing countries after the traditional project approach had failed to meet expectations; the project funding mechanism being associated with time-consuming and costly parallel management structures (Foster, 2007). The approach was also viewed as bias towards responding to the needs and interests of donors at the expense of critical sector priorities. Therefore, it was anticipated that a SWAp would provide a better modality with improved funding and financial mechanisms.

It was against such a background that government officials in this study tended to show consistent optimism towards SWAp funding and financial mechanisms. Table 7.7 shows how partners viewed financial mechanisms in terms of improving funding to sector programmes, while Table 7.8 focuses on how funding mechanisms improved overall sector budgeting.

Table 7.7 Perceptions of the degree to which financial mechanisms in the Malawian education SWAp improve the funding of sector programmes

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	18	94.7%	13	81.3%	4	80.0%
To some extent	1	5.3%	3	18.8%	1	20.0%
To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

Table 7.8 Perceptions of the degree to which funding mechanisms in the Malawian education SWAp improve overall sector budgeting

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	17	89.5%	10	62.5%	5	100.0%
To some extent	1	5.3%	5	31.3%	0	0
To no extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	0	0

Source: The author's compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

A high proportion of all groups agreed that financial mechanisms improved funding to sector programmes, 94.7 percent of government officials, 81.3 percent of DPs, and 80 percent of CSOs/NGOs indicating that such mechanisms improved programme funding to a large extent. Again, government officials returned a score of 89.5 percent on funding mechanisms for the overall sector budget, thus indicating a very positive trend in terms of both financial and funding mechanisms, which are related. On the other hand, CSOs/NGOs showed a more positive bias towards funding mechanisms for the sector budget, with a 100 percent score.

In general, all partners show a strong trend towards the perception that these two factors influenced funding to the sector. This finding indicates that a move towards a SWAp that supported a pooled funding mechanism (as was the case with the “embryonic” SWAp for the implementation of the PCAR programme) enhanced funding to the sector. However, this contention is only partially corroborated by the qualitative data, which acknowledges that, according to government officials, there was an improvement in funding to the PCAR programme in spite of some intrinsic inconsistency. Indeed, both the trend and the results of qualitative data analysis demonstrate that there were inconsistencies in funding that tended to affect sector programmes negatively.

One reason for such negativity is that at the time of data collection, the JFA document had not yet been signed by those DPs who had indicated a willingness to contribute to the pool fund. There was uncertainty around JFA funding mechanisms at this time, as

some DPs wanted the government to meet the condition of a minimum government allocation to the primary education subsector before releasing funds to the pool. Another aspect of the JFA funding mechanism was that some DPs who were not part of the pool were concerned that the two categories of “pool fund DPs” and “non-pool fund DPs” might create unnecessary divisions within the DP group. An example of the attempt to address this division is the chair deciding to include all DPs in meetings originally intended for “pool fund DPs” only.

The findings of the survey (see Appendix D) show that there was a perceived moderate shift in DP funding patterns, with a score of 52 percent for government officials, 56 percent for DPs, and 40 percent for CSOs/NGOs – each indicating such a perception to a large extent. This finding is again consistent with ‘trend analysis’, Table 7.1 and qualitative analysis data that show that DPs maintained their project approach for the lengthy period up to the initiation of the NESP.

7.4 Funding vs. Other Aspects of the SWAp Partnership

The survey (see Appendix 4) provides information on a number of other aspects that affected funding and partnership interaction in this education SWAp process. One prominent area of these data is the financial factor, which determines the amount of power, influence and participation a DP enjoyed in the partnership. Table 7.9 shows how the principal donor to the education sector exercised power.

Table 7.9 Perceptions of the degree to which the principal donor to the education sector exercises power over the SWAp process

Response	Government Officials		DPs		CSOs/NGOs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
To a large extent	15	78.9%	11	68.8%	2	40.0%
To some extent	2	10.5%	3	18.8%	2	40.0%
To no extent	2	10.5%	2	12.5%	1	20.0%

Source: The author’s compilation from frequency tables generated by SPSS

The trend in respect of all groups of partners is that the principal donor exercised power in the education SWAp partnership to a large extent, although the CSO/NGO score is comparatively low (40 percent). Conversely, the government officials' score (78.9 percent) is high, while that for the DPs (68.8 percent) represents the median score. While confirming the qualitative data discussed in Chapter 5, 6 and 8, this finding also indicates a concern on the part of the two main stakeholders (the government and DPs) around the way power was exercised in that it had a negative effect on a partnership that was formed to work in close cooperation in the interests of enhancing sector performance. Given that the overall purpose of the SWAp was to enhance funding and improve general sector performance and aid effectiveness, this area requires addressing if the power around funding that adversely affects actors' performance is to be minimized.

Survey data (see Appendix D) also reveal the extent to which the amount of funds donated to the sector by a DP influenced the manner in which it participated in the SWAp process. A sizeable proportion of DPs (87.5 percent) indicated that the amount of funds donated to the sector by any stakeholder influenced its participation in the education SWAp process to a large extent; the second highest score of 84.2 percent was that of the government officials; and the CSOs/NGOs were in broad agreement with a score of 60 per cent. This evidence accords with observations of the qualitative data whereby actors' perspectives clearly indicate that the amount of financial assistance to the government influenced the manner in which the donor participated in the SWAp process.

Another dimension for which the survey provides data concerns efforts made in the SWAp partnership to accommodate priority areas identified by the government when funding the sector. All three groups of partners acknowledged that stakeholders considered priority areas identified by the government when funding the sector. The DPs and CSOs/NGOs scored highly (80 percent) in indicating that stakeholders in the SWAp process considered to a large extent priority areas identified by the government when funding the sector, and the government officials' equivalent score was only a little lower at 73.7 percent.

Qualitative data presented in Chapter 6 and 8 highlight the problems encountered when DPs attempted to influence the process in order to have their interests incorporated into SWAp documents. Therefore, it is not clear whether all priorities reflected in the NESP as the main SWAp document were those of the government alone. However, evidence from qualitative data indicates that although an effort was made to accommodate government priorities in this SWAp process, other factors militated against their full incorporation.

Evidence from the survey that is consistent with the trend analysis relates to the extent to which DPs' funding to the sector concentrated on their old projects and areas of interest (see Appendix D). Government officials (68.4 percent) indicated that this occurred to a large extent, while the equivalent DP score was 62.5 percent. However, the CSO/NGO score was 40 percent, with a majority of 60 percent indicating a more or less neutral position and thereby differing from the stance of both government and DPs.

Therefore, it is evident that both government officials and DPs perceived funding to the sector from the latter to be concentrated on their old projects and areas of interests, although the percentage is not high, an aspect that indicates that attempts were probably being made to adjust to the requirements of the new SWAp modality. This evidence is also consistent with the qualitative data finding that DPs continued with the project approach throughout the PIF period up to the initiation of the NESP, the latter to some extent representing projects that DPs had been funding all along.

This part has provided information that has revealed that there were additional aspects of the education SWAp partnership that affected the process in terms of participation and funding to the sector. These include the amount of money DPs donated to the government; DPs' ambition to have their priorities included in policy and planning documents; and the perpetuation of old projects and areas of interest regardless of the shift to a SWAp. All these factors have been found to impact negatively on the SWAp process in terms of its partnership living up to the conceptual understanding of the modality and the prescriptions of the Paris Declaration framework.

7.5 Conclusion

Through the examination of qualitative data collected in a survey and quantitative data generated by means of a trend analysis of DP funding over seven years (i.e. from the initiation of the NESP), this chapter has shown that there were a number of factors in the Malawian education SWAp process that affected the way in which funding to the sector was influenced. Evidence has shown that partnership relations negatively affected education funding, thereby posing potential threats to both aid effectiveness and enhanced support to the sector. Both trend and qualitative data analyses identified inconsistencies in funding that affected sector programmes negatively. This practice led to a failure to meet the expectations of education partners whereby coherence of funding should have been maintained and aid delivery consistent if the government were to be afforded greater flexibility and control over the planning and implementation of sector programmes.

This section has also found that the coordination of the education SWAp process affected funding to the sector. It has pointed out that such management was affected by issues linked to ownership and leadership, both of which demanded the requisite capacity. The chapter has provided evidence that financial mechanisms employed by DPs improved funding to the sector, attributing this to the pool fund created around the implementation of PCAR, in spite of the fact that DPs continued to operate in their old project mode and did not utilize government systems for disbursement. The failure by DPs to adopt government systems is an area that requires further investigation in the light of the findings of evaluation reports on the implementation of the Paris Declaration (Wood et al., 2008). This section has also confirmed government optimism that a SWAp modality could improve funding to the sector.

This chapter has also highlighted the finding that the amount of money DPs donated could negatively affect interaction in this SWAp process as it perpetrated skewed participation. Moreover, it has been shown that funding to the sector was perceived to concentrate on DPs' old projects and areas of interest. Generally, the findings presented in this chapter are consistent with those of the qualitative data, as provided in chapters 5, 6 and 8. Finally, there is clear evidence that funding to the sector was affected by

several other factors. Therefore, a concerted effort to address these areas is called for if the realization of the anticipated enhanced funding to the sector is to be realized in accordance with the concept of a SWAp.

Chapter 8

Power Relations

8.0 Introduction

According to Foucault (Denegri-Knott, 2004; Deacon, 2002), power relations are social relations; they operate through discourse and hence it may be assumed that they are likely to exist in a SWAp partnership. Therefore, an examination of such relations among actors in the Malawian education SWAp partnership was useful not only to understand how power was exercised in the process, but also to ascertain how these dynamics affected this partnership, particularly in terms of conflicts of resources and interests among the actors (Wright, 1996).

Although power relations constitute a thread that runs through three chapters of this thesis (chapters five to seven), it is the present chapter that is dedicated to specifically investigating the various perceptions of power relations in the Malawian education SWAp partnership. The fact that actors constantly referred to aspects of power relations when considering other issues in the partnership indicates that this topic was of central concern to them and that they believed the distribution of power required redress.

The first part of this chapter consists of eight sections:

1. Money/Resources
2. Expertise/Knowledge
3. Agency Style or Modus Operandi
4. Individual Personality
5. Government/Agency Policy
6. Historical Perspective – The Period of DP Involvement
7. Degree of Participation – Commitment of Time and Human Resources
8. Time Management in the Disbursement of Funds

These sections examine actors' perspectives on power relations in the education SWAp process, views that cover several identified themes according to which power was deployed. The last section draws some conclusions based on the preceding discussion of the eight sources of power, declaring the position of this thesis, which has been established from the various perceptions of the tangled web of power relations in the education SWAp partnership.

8.1 Money/Resources

As an aspect of international development cooperation, DPs provide aid in the form of money and resources to recipient governments; and, comparatively recently, changes to this convention have adopted new modalities that have witnessed a shift to the SWAp as one commonly used method of assisting developing countries (Forster, 1999). As a new aid modality, the SWAp is not only very much associated with aid effectiveness but also provides a way for donors to collaborate closely in supporting the meeting of international targets such as the MDGs (King and Rose, 2005). Consequently, when DPs in the education SWAp partnership under study donated money and resources to the Malawian government, this was viewed as one of their expected duties according to international aid relations.

As was seen in both chapters five and six, actors consistently identified the role of DPs with the provision of the necessary financial support to meet MDGs and EFA targets. Actors broadly agreed that the money/resources DPs donated to the government constituted a contributory factor to power relations in the partnership, although dissenting views from some DPs on this issue were not unexpected due to their role as donors. Generally, the main concern was over the ways in which DPs who provided more money than others wielded power in the education SWAp partnership.

Several DPs identified money/resources as a source of the power that was exercised in the partnership: *'Power relations can be described at two levels of influence; big DPs who put more money in education want to have their voices heard more than others within the SWAp partnership' (DP1, Jan. 09)*. Similarly, *'Partners with more resources have more say in the partnership; for example, when it comes to focusing on priority*

areas, a partner with more resources influences more policy in that area' (DPM3, Jan. 09). Emphasizing the point that those who gave more support seemed to enjoy 'more say', another DP indicated that, 'Partners who contribute more resources to the sector have tended to have more voice... Power relations exist because they reflect [the] size of contribution ...' (DPM4, June 09).

There was a similar perception from yet another DP:

There are some development partners that contribute a big share to the education budget, either through bilateral contribution or multilateral, so for those development partners, they tend to want to exercise more power commensurate with the contribution that they are making to government (DPM5, May 09).

The views of the majority of DPs further identified how power was deployed in the education SWAp in line with the money/resources that DPs provided, particularly those that provided more than others. One DP expressed the common assumption that donating more money was a licence to assume control: *'I think we take it very positively that if you put in more money, we give you also the reference to see we are controlling as well. We cannot say simply you are putting in more money into it, then you are going to drive the boat to work, no' (DPM2, May 09).*

Another DP highlighted the influence that those DPs who donated money/resources exerted on SWAp policy decisions:

When it comes to focusing on priority areas, a partner with more resources influences more policy in that area, for example, Agency DP4 and AgencyDPM5 on youth and girls' education. [The] Ministry of Education would give more attention and prominence to a partner with more resources... My general comment is that everybody, and I as an individual, appreciate the SWAp process, but the problem emanates from being donor dependent. (DPM3, Jan. 09).

Conversely, another DP revealed an area of concern over the negative effects the issue of money/resources had on DPs who donated less:

Of course, it has to some extent [a] negative impact in the sense that other smaller development partners feel that their contribution is not appreciated. And

also there are times when they think that their contribution is related to the amount of resources that they have contributed, and not maybe in the issues that they bring on board (DPM5, May 09).

Elaborating further on the negative effects this had on the participation of actors, this DP said:

There is a typical example where one donor – I will not mention the name – was so influential to the extent that other partners were absenting themselves from coordination meetings, because it was very apparent that that development partner was pushing their own agenda through the rest of the members, so that their agenda should be seen as something that has been agreed in a development partners' meeting (DPM5, May 09).

Apart from revealing the manner in which participation was affected due to power relations, the above comment also suggests another way DPs could exercise power. Voicing a concern about the influence and power that those who donated more money/resources tended to have, one DP remarked:

In the partnership, level of influence is noticed when one voices...an opinion. It is carried out, but I'm not sure whether this is influenced by the personality or organization where one works, or power associated with resources – more resources equals more power – or their approach or way of doing things (DPM3, Jan. 09).

These viewpoints – the example given by DP5M in particular – underline the negative effects such practices might have on other actors in the partnership, the assumption being that all actors would want to be treated and allowed to participate on equal terms. Comparatively, more views on money/resources as a source of power came from multilateral than bilateral DPs. This could be related to the desire to act according to political self-interest that tends to be prevalent among the latter (Minch, 2010) such that they might consequently be prone to attempting to wield more power than other DPs.

From these observations, it is evident that the exercising of power in this partnership did not conform to the conventional expectations of actors in a SWAp set up. DPs who wielded more power seemed to make use of their money and resources to acquire a position of influence, a contention corroborated by Collins (1992, p.61):

The successful power wielder is not just pressing buttons; he or she is engaging in some quite complex social manipulation. Individuals who manage to be powerful and get their own way must do so by going along with the laws of social organisation, not by contradicting them.

The evidence from DPs shows that power was not equally shared in this SWAp partnership. This could have constrained the government's leadership role in the process, particularly in determining national policy priorities and needs, which was contrary to the Paris Declaration framework under which these partners operated (King and Rose, 2005; Hyden, 2008). Traditional social organization dictates that the DPs with the most money have the most influence over policy and practice – a power experience expressed as 'power over'. However, the SWAp process is supposed to be more democratic and egalitarian – power expressed as 'power with' (Hyden, 2008).

According to the following remarks, the observations of government officials were consistent with those of the DPs discussed above in the way power was exercised based on the quantity of money/resources DPs donated to the government. The evidence presented below shows that the majority of government officials also acknowledged that the amount of money/resources tended to be proportional to the extent of an actor's "voice" and ability to wield power over others. Nevertheless, according to interviewees' accounts, paradoxically, it was the government that accorded DPs who donated more a greater say in influencing interactions, one official stating:

The resource package makes them more powerful – the more money one partner has, the more areas of impact, and therefore the power balance comes in. Power balance comes in the sense that those who have more will also talk more and be listened to. Although in a SWAp, we would want to approach things from an equality point of view...in reality, that's what happens (GOE1, May 09).

Expressing a similar view, another government official stated, *'I already alluded to the fact of power relations that those who pour in more money into the SWAp feel they have all the right to lead the SWAp and exercise more power than every other development partner (GOE3, May 09)*. Parallel views were expressed by another government official, who said *'...the money level is a factor for a partner exercising more power over others' (GOE5, May 09)*; and a third, who stated, *'Those who put in more resources are identified with power because they fully believe in their putting in money because you*

show power by the money you put it... The money aspect [be]comes very prominent in power relations' (GOF1, May 09).

One government official acknowledged two sources of power relations: *'Some powers are coming from the legislation; others are coming as a result of ability to contribute financially... So, naturally, you would expect powerhouses to come from there (GOC1, May 09).*

Underscoring the weight of money/resources as a power factor that affected partnerships, a government official remarked, *'Even if you talk of bilateral relations in government, one is more powerful than the other. What makes them more powerful is pertaining to resources' (GOC1, May 09).*

In view of the perspectives of government officials on power relations in this education SWAp partnership, which equated more money with more power, there seems to be compelling evidence of the significance of the role played by funding. A critical examination of these statements also suggests that although the government was seen to respond in accordance with the amount of money received from DPs by giving them a platform in interactions, and influence over policy and practice, the former did not seem to be entirely happy in surrendering its role of determining priorities and needs. The government complied in the interests of getting more money out of the DPs, but the question is at what cost was it prepared to continue with this state of affairs. In the meantime, the DPs seem to have had the power to make the government bow to their demands at will in order that it might get its funding.

Such is the problem of aid dependency, with its consequent top-down approach that can negatively affect partnerships (Aerni, n.d.). Therefore, if the recipient country's expectations are to be met, all actors in the partnership must adhere to the concept of a SWAp, and give the government the opportunity to assume leadership and ownership. It also calls for discipline and substantial change in respect of *modus operandi* on the part of the DPs.

While the majority of government officials' comments focused on money/resources as a source of power, they also highlighted the effects that such power had on the engagement of actors in the partnership; particularly in terms of DPs that donated less money compared to others, as indicated by one official:

There are some negative energies that are exerted in terms of power relations in the education SWAp process. If I am [were] a partner, I wouldn't want to be demeaned by a bigger partner to [than] the ministry. I would like to be treated as an equal because whatever I am doing forms part of the integral part of the whole... Donors chain [harness] a lot of negative energies towards each other...[but] we are working towards one thing (GOE3, May 09).

The government official continued to comment on the effects of power relations on the participation of actors emphasizing skewed participation created due to money:

In meetings, there are donors who shrink as an issue is being discussed or being tabled. Some donors don't say anything because they are afraid of a bigger donor... There are donors who want to really get areas where others are supporting, forgetting that no matter how small a contribution is, it still makes a change in the education system (GOE3, May 09).

Again, this government official's viewpoint – which was shared by one DP – shows how, if left uncontrolled, power relations can have a negative effect on the participation of actors in a partnership.

Contrary to the SWAp rationale, the perceptions of the majority of government officials in this study revealed that power relations obtained in the education SWAp partnership. In the main, these were manifested in the form of DP influence over the decision-making process and tended to affect the implementation of programmes. Accordingly, as observed earlier, this SWAp process does not seem to have afforded the government the opportunity to determine its own national priorities or needs. Such a situation is in danger of jeopardizing the level of aid effectiveness that the Paris Declaration framework seeks to accomplish and could subsequently lead to the failure to achieve international targets, as cautioned by Colclough (2005).

As is evident from the perceptions of government officials, money/resources constituted the main source of the power DPs tended to use to influence the policy process.

Therefore, it could be argued that the education policies and programmes realized in this SWAp process might not have truly reflected national priorities. This contention underscores the concerns of the government official highlighted in Chapter 6 who cited the example of the life skills programme and support for teacher training, both of which reflected DP priorities rather than those of the government.

Contrary to the prescriptions of the Paris Declaration, empirical findings reveal that DPs tended to hold the power to influence priority areas based on their own interests. This poses a dilemma in policy-making in developing countries, in which tension seems to arise due to dialectical conflict between macro and micro policy, and macro and micro politics in the interaction between DPs and the recipient government. Equally, the perceptions of government officials provide evidence that the participation of many actors in this SWAp process was adversely affected.

The observed pattern in the way government officials perceived issues in this partnership is consistent, their main area of interest being unswervingly around the funding of education programmes. In Chapter 5, it was noted that such concern meant that the government relied on international development aid to implement these programmes. Making such assistance critical to the implementation of government policy had a bearing not only on progress towards EFA and the MDGs, but also on the performance of individual directors in their respective departments. Incidentally, this could also provide some explanation of the behaviour of government officials in the education SWAp process who tended to be attracted to and moved by money, permitting DPs steal the show by influencing policy and practice.

As indicated below, the perceptions of CSOs/NGOs were also generally in agreement with those of others actors, but with some slight variations. It is worthwhile noting here that CSOs are a critical partner in the development agenda, as outlined in the Paris Declaration framework and emphasized thus in the Accra Agenda for Action:

We will deepen our engagement with CSOs as independent development actors in their own right whose efforts complement those of governments and the private sector. We share an interest in ensuring that SCO contributions to development reach their full potential (Accra Agenda for Action, 2008, pp.18–19).

In view of this observation, the participation of CSOs in this SWAp process should have been crucial.

The perceptions of civil society also identified the amount of money/resources a DP donated as a major force that affected interactions amongst actors through the manifestation of power relations in the SWAp partnership. One CSO member commented, *'The major reason for a stakeholder to exercise more power is the level of financing to projects'* (CS1, June 09). Another expressed a similar view: *'...some [feel that] because they...are the ones putting in a lot of money...[they] should take greater control of the resources'* (CS3, May 09). There was yet another comparable viewpoint from a CSO member who said, *'...Issues of resources...would influence one partner to exercise more power than others'* (CS2, May 09).

While emphasizing money/resources as a source of power, one CSO member went a step further to apportion it:

First of all, power is with the development partners who have the money and the monetary institutions. Secondly, at local level, power is with the Ministry of Finance; they have the money wallet, they are the people who determine the ceilings (CS2, May 09).

As with the earlier perceptions of DPs and government officials, based on evidence from civil society, power had its foundations in money and resources, a circumstance that allowed DPs who donated more money to behave differently from others and exercise control in the SWAp process. This contributed to an environment of unequal participation that made it difficult for civil society to fulfil its role and responsibilities in the SWAp partnership as articulated in the Paris Declaration framework, and reinforced in the Accra Agenda for Action. Again, when examined from a government perspective, the manner in which power operated in this SWAp process tended to constrain civil society in its ability to shape and play a global governance role (Sending and Neumann, 2006) on account of its skewed participation.

Actors in all three main categories pointed out that the money/resources DPs donated to the government tended to create an imbalance of power in the education SWAp

partnership, with some DPs wielding more power than others, influencing policy and practice, and creating unequal participation. All these factors contributed to undermining the role of civil society as a watchdog in the process.

8.2 Expertise/Knowledge

Aside from money and resources, expertise/knowledge is another area that is generally believed to be a contribution of DPs in international aid relations. DPs are associated with expertise/knowledge and therefore perceived to be better informed than recipient governments – although, by implication, this perception would seem to automatically place government officials participating in a SWAp process at a lower level than DPs in terms of expertise/knowledge.

Some DPs' highlighted expertise/knowledge as source of power relations in this education SWAp partnership, one of their number stating that, *'A combination of size of resource contribution and expertise make some exercise more power over others'* (DPM4, June 09). Another DP shared a similar view: *'...Because of the resources and the expertise they are able to mobilize, [DPs] have had a lot more say in the process'* (DPM1, June 09).

In commenting on this issue, one DP argued that participation could be realized through expertise/knowledge without one necessarily contributing more in terms of financial input:

...you have to provide the technical expertise, and that means you have to be very eloquent and clear on what you are presenting, showing that you understand the issues. If you don't, then your participation will naturally be downgraded... So, there is a lot of emphasis within the development partners to recruit sector specialists who know the ideals and can effectively participate' (DPM2, May 09).

This view provides evidence of the significant role expertise/knowledge plays in a SWAp process. As seen in Chapter 6, the technical proficiency DPs brought to this education SWAp partnership was acknowledged by several actors when describing the role of the former in the process. Therefore, it could be argued that the greater the

expertise/knowledge, the higher the participation level. However, the perception of expertise/knowledge whereby DPs are regarded as being more knowledgeable than others poses a question about the degree of participation of both the government and civil society. This situation is further compounded by the expectation that a SWAp is a process that seeks to develop the capacity of the recipient government – how much capacity development can be achieved by a process in which participation is constrained?

Government officials also cited expertise/knowledge as another factor in power relations in the SWAp partnership that could have adverse effects if applied wrongly. Underlining the implications for programme implementation that the power of expertise/knowledge could have, one government official explained:

[A crucial factor is] the amount of knowledge and expertise...they bring into a particular programme. ... Agency DPMI would do some research perhaps elsewhere. ...they draw their evidence, and they will come to you and say, 'We have tried this and that, and this is now the agenda. If you want to move forward with your programmes, yes, we have money, but if you want to get this money we recommend that you also look at this particular programme.' A case in point is the current School Health and Nutrition Programme (GOE2, May 09).

GOE2 described in some detail the unfortunate outcome of this intervention, which seems to have been imposed on the Ministry of Education due to the power over its programmes that the DP exercised with disregard to government opinion:

When we were discussing under ESSP⁸ 1, some of us felt strongly that the best placed people to implement the School Health and Nutrition Programme were our colleagues in the Ministry of Health. Like the issue of deworming, the treatment of malaria, bilharzia, we strongly believe that our colleagues in the Ministry of Health are best placed to deliver that aspect of School Health and Nutrition. But then, Agency DPIM would say, 'No, you ought to do this...' We are implementing; we have problems and we really don't know what would happen in future to that programme (GOE2, May 09).

This example serves as a caution about the unwarranted influence human capital theory can inflict on an education policy agenda and its programmes in the name of neo-liberal economic policy (Rose, 2003; Samoff, 2004).

⁸ Education Sector Support Project.

Another government official also linked expertise to power relations: ‘... *some powers are coming from...an ability to contribute...expertise*’ (GOC1, May 09).

CSO members also provided their perspectives on this issue, likewise identifying expertise/knowledge as another source of power; one of their number remarking, ‘*The major reason for a stakeholder to exercise more power is...and also the political clout they have and information/expertise*’ (CS1, May 09).

Another CSO member discussed power relations in terms of policy-making for the SWAp process:

The real power is with those who are initiating ideas. So, when we meet as civil society, development partners and the government...[the] government and development partners still have the power (CS2, May 09).

These perspectives provide evidence that expertise/knowledge was a factor in the power relations experienced in this SWAp. The views of all actors also reveal that DPs tended to wield power derived from their expertise/knowledge in order to influence programmes; and, in some cases, this source of power seemed to affect programmes negatively.

The notion that expertise/knowledge is a resource that lies with and is brought to the development agenda predominantly by DPs therefore requires revisiting. Before utilizing expertise/knowledge, there is a need to consider seriously the context-specific basis on which programmes are built and implemented; and no one should ignore the fact that what works in one country might not necessarily work in another.

In a SWAp partnership that presupposes an element of capacity development for the recipient government, the assumption that DPs are more knowledgeable puts government officials at a disadvantage in terms of participation in the SWAp process. Indeed, this study found that those with more expertise/knowledge had a greater chance to participate more influentially in the partnership.

One possible factor that could have militated against the building of government capacity in this SWAp process was its failure to accord government officials the opportunity to participate effectively. What is evident is that money/resources and expertise/knowledge as sources of power tended to be exploited by DPs in order to help themselves gain control over the entire process, including the decision-making process and policy dialogue.

Although some views of civil society indicated that the government could realize power through the fostering of ideas, the evidence shows that government officials' opinions were unlikely to be considered as DPs tended to have the final say. The example cited by one government official of the programme that was imposed on the ministry in spite of its resistance serves as evidence to this effect.

8.3 Agency Style or Modus Operandi

It is broadly understood that any organization exists for a particular purpose; therefore, it is this purpose that guides the organization's operations, including the approach it adopts. In terms of a SWAp, with the government, various aid agencies, and CSOs working together, some actors might be primarily motivated by their modus operandi to behave in a certain way. Accordingly, another dimension DPs identified with power relations was agency style or modus operandi. DPs revealed this as a factor that tended to cause some individuals to assume that they deserved a bigger share than others in the SWAp partnership simply on account of the power and attitude of the organizations they represented:

There are DPs who are powerful; I think they are just powerful maybe because of the organizational set-up. I gave an example of Agency DPM1; it's not a personality issue, it's just the way the organization is... So, even if you may want to choose another partner to work on a project that is funded by Agency DPM1, you don't succeed going [in getting] away from the Agency DPM1... [Some activities] will still be feasible, like in the monitoring of [the] implementation of FTI... You can still see consistency in the organizations and the way employees or representatives behave (DP2, June 10).

While acknowledging the challenges of leading DPs in the education SWAp partnership, DP3 indicated that an element of agency *modus operandi* clearly lay behind the fact that representatives of certain organizations demonstrated their power by acquiring more roles than others:

It is not good being in this position and you get pushed where others are trying to exercise more power... Like, we had a problem a few weeks ago trying to allocate or nominate people to various technical working groups... And suddenly, we saw Agency DP2 was trying to get to be co-chair of as many groups... I suspected that if that would happen, they were just going to assign some of their consultants to sit in technical working groups; but that is not acceptable (DP3, Oct. 10).

Thus, agency *modus operandi* empowered individuals working for that organization to behave in a particular way in order to fulfil its goals. While such an attitude should be differentiated from that of individual organization members, the evidence of this study suggests that elements of individual personality might thrive on agency style.

A CSO member also pointed to an aspect of agency style as a factor in power relations: *'...the issue of the structure, the configuration, would influence one partner to exercise more power than others' (CS2, May 09).*

Another CSO member also cited agency *modus operandi* as the origin of the tendency for some DPs to acquire a high level of influence in interactions amongst actors in the partnership:

Some of them [DPs] feel or see themselves as too big... I don't want to mention institutions here, but...my observation is that there are some donor agencies that really feel that they should be in the driver's seat. Maybe now the ministry is taking control, but sometimes they even reach the point of controlling the agenda (CS3, May 09).

Another CSO member had a slightly different take in emphasizing the extent to which power exerted by multilateral financial institutions that focused on economic development generally could affect funding to specific programmes:

Power is with the Agency DPM1 and the Agency DPM6. That is why, irrespective of what we say about few teachers, few classrooms, Agency DPM1

will determine how much should be given to the Ministry of Education (CS2, May 09).

The above views on *modus operandi* provide evidence that DPs tended to wield power not only in the interests of driving the SWAp agenda, but also of assuming control over programme decision making. This in turn suggests a disparity between the principles and practice of a SWAp partnership, a notion that Buchert (2002) identifies as a major concern about the new aid modality. However, in the context of a neo-liberal international agenda, recipient governments are likely to continue to be pressurized by multilateral organizations and the World Bank in particular; as was the experience of Malawi in the 1980s in its obligation to raise primary school fees (Rose, 2003).

Compared with those from multilateral organizations, the perceptions of power relations of individuals with bilateral aid agencies seem to have focused more on power exerted from the perspective of *modus operandi* than that of money and resources donated to the government. As alluded to earlier, this bias could have been founded on the political self-interest they normally pursued. Furthermore, the power resulting from agency *modus operandi* – which has an inclination towards multilateral aid agencies – could pose a challenge to bilateral DPs.

8.4 Individual Personality

A process such as the Malawian education SWAp partnership presupposes the involvement of various people from different backgrounds interacting in the interests of a common goal. As has been suggested earlier, the aspect of individual personality is likely to surface in these interactions, especially given individual differences and the fact that no two human beings behave in quite the same way. Thus, actors highlighted individual personality and the manner in which the exercise of power affected others as a source of power relations in the education SWAp partnership.

One DP expressed the opinion that, views on the agency's style in relation to personality notwithstanding, individual qualities based on evidence remained important in the SWAp partnership. The DP provided an example of how things changed after a

new person had joined one DP: *'...but now Zeena [pseudonym] came in, and despite Zeena's young age, Zeena is a very nice, interesting person to work with, who has managed to make...Agency DPM1 a credible partner and not a bulldozer, as we saw...with Agency DPM1 in the past in many countries' (DP3, Oct. 10).*

While some DPs linked personality to their organizations, other perceptions on personality revealed details of the way individual actors interacted with others in the education SWAp partnership.

Government officials acknowledged that whilst the exercising of power over others was directly related to the amount donated, the manifestation of power itself was linked to the individual personalities of those representing DP organizations:

The money level is a factor for a partner exercising more power over others, but I have also noted that personalities in these issues also matter. We have seen people come and go and the way they deal with issues has not been constant [consistent] (GOE5, May 09).

A similar view from another government official also associated power with personality in addition to other factors, in indicating that it could *'...either be a question of personalities amongst the partners and also...it is dependent upon personalities'* (GOE2, May 09).

These views were corroborated by a CSO member who stated, *Some [DPs] are just egocentric, if I am to use that word, they just want to feel to be in power (CS3, May 09).*

It may be observed from these perspectives that individual personality was a factor that tended to influence the flow of power from DPs in this SWAp partnership regardless of whether their actions were reinforced by other sources of power or not. Indeed, individual personality seemed to play a bigger role compared to the other sources of power because of its ability to thrive on them. In order to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon, it would be of interest to investigate the individuals wielding more power than others, that is, those displaying individual personality traits, where they come from, and what agencies they represent.

8.5 Government/Agency Policy

Minch (2010) notes a difference between aid provided by bilateral donors and aid provided by multilateral donors, which in the case of the present study underpins the reason why government/agency policy might be a power factor in an aid partnership such as the Malawian education SWAp process. Only one DP representative highlighted government/agency policy as a dimension of the power relations experienced in this partnership. This was with regard to the stance held by some DPs on the improvement of education in Malawi, which stemmed from their own governments' policies. In pursuing such policies, DPs had a tendency to exercise power over others in the attempt to achieve their goals, one of their number stating:

Personalities come and go, but we still see that there are certain positions that various development partners have about how they can improve education in Malawi. And those positions are held very strongly to the extent that they don't want to move from their positions; but these positions are a manifestation of the policies of their governments that is translated into the power that is played [out] within the development partners (DPM5, May 09).

Government officials also argued that government/agency policy had a role, one of them asserting that it could '*...be a question of personalities...and also the agenda from the host government*' (GOE2, May 09). Another said: '*I have a feeling that power relations exist because of hidden agendas, interests and the political motives that could be attached to the assistance that we receive, so you find that in terms of consultancy, there are a lot of rules and regulations attached to that*' (GOE6, May 09). This government official went on to explain that DPs tended to insist on recruiting technical advisors from countries that provided aid disregarding the availability of expertise in the recipient state, concluding that, '*it looks like if you accept that assistance, it becomes the easy way of getting the funding*' (GOE6, May 09).

Another government official underlined the problem of programme implementation that tended to be constantly affected by DP decisions based on their home government policies:

We know as government that partners have pressures from their country offices and sometimes, this is evident in the way they play their cards. If a partner is

having pressure from their country office, they will make sure that they will sound that alarm to us in such a way that they will misdirect us. Instead of us focusing on our priorities, they will be directing us in a way that we should spend their money, that it should be seen [to be] working (GOE3, May 09).

Government officials thus drew attention to an area of concern whereby ministry programmes tended to be driven by the preferences and policies of DP governments. It is evident that DPs had the upper hand in decision making in this partnership, leaving both the government and civil society powerless. This seems to reverse the normal societal convention that being in a position of power, the government should be held accountable for its policy decisions. Yet, the government only showed signs of weakness by succumbing to such influence just to get the funding – which is contrary to the rationale of a SWAp and the expectations of the Paris Declaration framework (Buchert, 2002; Brown et al., 2001; Hamblin, 2006; Hyden, 2008).

However, the manner in which power operated in this education SWAp partnership tends to reflect the observation made by Samoff (2004) on the difficulty of achieving country-led development due to the aid dependency of the recipient government. Yet, he also cautions against placing importance on recipient government leadership and interests at the expense of the interests of DPs in a SWAp. The latter contention could be problematic not only with regard to the prescriptions of the Paris Declaration framework, but also in terms of how a SWAp should formulate its policies and strategies.

A CSO member revealed the tendency for programmes to be affected by DP decisions: *'Probably...[it] can be a limiting factor to say that the development partners are coming here with already designed programmes and we have to fit in there, but I think that is the style of the game' (CS2, May 2009).*

Whilst the views of CSO members on power relations as they affected funding to the education sector covered various areas of concern, in the course of showing appreciation for the new modality of the SWAp, one of them was also quick to identify the maintenance of donor conditionality to aid in line with their government/agency policies:

Power relations can either strengthen or weaken some processes of [the] SWAp, for instance, the specific conditions attached to their aid, which make it difficult for government to freely utilize the resources. For example, the MGDS Review for 2007 noted that some donors were still insisting on using their own financial and reporting systems (CS1, June 09).

Another related area that this CSO member highlighted in connection with the 2007 MGDS Review concerned decisions made on funding subsectors: *'Some donors oversubscribed to a particular subsector at the expense of others; areas such as early childhood development, adult literacy, [and] science and technology have been underfunded because of such oversubscription' (CS1, June 09).*

A similar view from another CSO member focused on funding to the higher education subsector:

In [the] recent past, they...always emphasized on primary – primary and secondary – and therefore, not much goes to [the] higher education subsector. So, you still see that managers of the higher education subsector have a big problem in managing this sector, which is not given enough resources (CS3, May 09).

Another CSO member voiced a similar opinion in respect of subsector programmes:

Decisions can either strengthen or weaken the partnerships and sector performance. Another example is that although the SWAp NESP recognizes ECD⁹ [and] adult education as components of education, the decision to have these implemented outside [the] MoE without [a] proper financing mechanism is making it difficult for such subsectors to get funding (CS1, June 09).

These perceptions support the notion that civil society was restricted in its efficacy, regarding itself to be virtually powerless owing to an inability to change the condition of this SWAp, as confirmed by the Malawi Education Country Status Report (2009), which stated that both early childhood development and adult education continued to attract very low funding.

A close look at the above views reveals that they are inconsistent with a watchdog role, which was to highlight gaps in or the unequal distribution of funds to subsectors. This

⁹ Early childhood development.

could serve as a caution that perhaps it is necessary to seriously reconsider the participation of civil society, not only with regard to its critical role in the SWAp partnership, but also in the interests of aid effectiveness, as stipulated in the Paris Declaration framework.

There was only one multilateral DP in this SWAp partnership, which nevertheless cited government/agency policy as a factor in power relations. On the other hand, no views could be obtained from the bilateral DPs, the majority of comments being from civil society. This could be attributed to the observation made earlier that it is bilateral agencies that tend to foster and adhere to their own government/agency policies in their operations. However, it is evident that there was a power imbalance that tended to favour DPs and their priorities over the government, which, again, contravened SWAp conventions and the Paris Declaration framework.

8.6 Historical Perspective – The Period of DP Involvement

In the international aid arena, there are both bilateral and multilateral agencies and conventional practice dictates that bilateral agencies provide assistance to former colonies due to existing ties between the two countries, which they normally implement on a large scale. Accordingly, as a former British colony, Malawi continues to receive aid from the UK. It is therefore not surprising that one DP in the present study cited these historical ties and the lengthy period it had been involved in Malawi as another source of power that a DP could exercise in the education SWAp process. This assertion was made based on the belief held by some DPs that lengthy historical and political ties with the Government of Malawi earned them the right to guide the development process:

Others – because of the history – others are partners that have been in Malawi for a long time. They have been supporting [the] government education sector right from independence, so they feel justified that they need to take a leading role because they have seen the education process evolving in Malawi and would like to take quite a strong position in terms of how they would want it to go (DPM5, May 09).

A similar perception from a government official explicitly linked power to the political relations that emanated from the historical, colonial affiliation between the Government of Malawi and the British government:

I think we should be realistic here. History speaks; Malawi was a colony of the British and because it was a colony of the British, even the Canadians, Americans and others, they will still feel the British have got an upper hand because of the political power relation... Even now, over history, Britain is still the largest donor to the education sector. They exercise more power over others (GOE1, May 09).

Another government official, who attempted to offer a solution to the power imbalance in the SWAp partnership, also cited the historical dimension as a factor:

One of the guiding principles to the partnership has to do with checking that power relations are not negatively affecting the partnerships; and also some of these may be historical. Other partners might say we have been assisting this country since it became independent (GOE2, May 09).

The evidence thus shows that DPs made use of historical ties in order to exercise power over others in this SWAp partnership. These perceptions could be associated with the main arguments of dependency theory, which addresses underlying relations between Western countries and developing countries (the so-called centre–periphery dynamics), and the failure of developing countries to gain total independence as a result of their economic difficulties (Easterly, 2009); hence the problematic power relations due to dependency, as cautioned by Samoff (2004).

8.7 Degree of Participation – Commitment of Time and Human Resources

In the traditional project approach, the government was never expected to contribute funds towards the implementation of projects initially funded by DPs. Consequently, the DPs had overall control in decision making around projects. However, the dynamics are different in a SWAp process in which the partners are supposed to operate on an equal footing – in a more democratic way. Accordingly, the government is called upon to demonstrate more accountability and responsibility in a SWAp.

However, the evidence under analysis in this section shows that in terms of programme servicing, the government tended to continue operating according to the old approach and did not allocate a budget for initiatives that DPs were funding. On the other hand, the financial constraints it faced could have contributed to its failure to commit funds to such programmes.

Government officials identified state failure to allocate funds to certain programmes as a contributory factor in the DP policy of limiting government participation in the decision-making process, and an aspect of power relations in the SWAp partnership. The non-recognition of government contribution in the form of human resources or time devoted to programme implementation further compounded the government's sense of disgruntlement. As a result, it seems that government participation in the SWAp process was compromised by underrepresentation when the partnership made decisions on programme issues.

Moreover, government officials also provided evidence of inconsistency in DP decision making on programme funding, one of their number citing the example of how the implementation of the PCAR programme was affected by this exercise of power:

One of the biggest challenges we have had as a ministry has been...the Primary Curriculum Assessment and Review... It has been like a tug of war where one is put this side and the other side [is] trying to push you, and say[ing], 'This is the way you should be moving.' But simultaneously, one would also understand that you cannot simply be talking without you committing yourself in one way or another, whether by funding or whatever (GOE4, May 09).

Another official commented on the same issue, elaborating on the need for the government to allocate funds to programmes in order to maintain control over them:

...otherwise, you have to live by the saying which says, 'Put your money where your mouth is.' What I have noted in the past in terms of programming, the ministry has tended not to put the money where its mouth is. It has tended to say that [this] programme is currently being supported by development partner a, b and c; therefore, we will put our money in a different programme... The best way to go...about implementing particular programmes...[is to] also show our commitment by putting in some resources...some partners will say, 'What is your contribution?' The government contributes a lot through its human resources... (GOE2, May 09).

Commenting on the degree of participation as a power factor, another government official stated:

From PIF to NESP, the partners are saying, 'We want government contribution,' but it is an issue of equal status. So, they say that if you want us to give you a 100 million [US\$], you should tell us what you are going to provide; forgetting that government already has resources that are provided in that particular subsector. So, what is coming up now is that government is being forced to cost the office accommodation, human resources, vehicles, the time (GOE1, May 09).

Sharing related views on the government contribution that tended to go unnoticed by DPs, another official said, *'Whilst our partners can say, 'This year, we will give you US\$11,000,' we have already a lot on the ground; we have human resources on the ground; we have already erected infrastructure on the ground' (GOE3, May 09).*

From the foregoing statements, it is evident that the degree of government participation tended to be adversely affected by its failure to commit funds to some programmes, meaning that decisions seemed to be made unilaterally by DPs. This was a growing issue in this SWAp partnership, which increasingly involved DPs asking for government contribution to programmes implemented with their support. Yet clearly, the government did not have as much money as the DPs; therefore, even with the modest amount the former might be able to commit, the question of whether this would represent a balancing of power in the SWAp partnership remains highly doubtful.

However, another dimension this evidence brings to light is the non-recognition of human resources and infrastructure that the government had already committed to programmes. This demonstrates the prevailing belief that money was the major recognized resource in this SWAp partnership. In response to this attitude, the government started costing and translating human resources, hours of labour, and infrastructure into monetary value in order that its contribution might attain credibility in the eyes of the DPs.

8.8 Time Management in the Disbursement of Funds

Timely implementation of education programmes can be crucial, particularly where they include components such as teacher training and procurement of education supplies that have to be aligned to the school calendar. The majority of government officials identified time management in the allocation of funds to programmes by DPs as another area of power relations that tended to emphasize the government's dependency on its donors. The views of government officials on this aspect of the process reflected how education programmes were affected by tight DP control over funding. In this case, power tended to be used in the form of decision making on the volume and timing of the release of funds, including when original programme funding agreements with the government were to be adjusted or terminated. Lamenting the situation, one official gave two examples:

Sometimes, we have situations, for example, at the beginning of the year, partners are stringent with their funds, but at the end of the year they are lavish and say we have so much to spend: 'How can you spend this money so that it doesn't go back to our capital?' But we didn't plan for that; what we planned for, we did it in a manner that was not planned because they were stringent with their money. But at the end, they realized they kept so much with them...and we have already done things in a manner that we did not want to do (GOE1, May 09).

Another way, they come midway and say that our programme is ending on such dates, so can you make sure you programme yourself towards this. And when we reach the end, previously they said, 'When we reach here, we will have another programme,' but once you reach the end, they tell you that this programme is pending, so we will not fund you for five months. And when you ask why you are not funding us for five months, they say that we do not have resources to bridge the gap... But yet, you are supposed to start the next phase immediately; and this is a challenge to the ministry because the programmes are continuous. While you are trying to sort that, they come back and say, 'We have given you the bridging resources, but we have shifted the next programme to such a date.' So you become a draft organization; you are not what you want to be and this is a negative part about the partnership (GOE1, May 09).

Another government official speculated on the timing of funding and the implications this had for programme implementation:

There are development partners who seem not to care much, but to respond to their home governments... The area that a particular donor is supporting, you suddenly find that the flow of aid stops and yet the project or programme is yielding good results. They exist, such development partners, so we shouldn't hide this from anybody. There are certain development partners who seem...stubborn and would want to do it their own way (GOE5, May 09).

Another government official also expressed concern about funding and the time factor:

The differences in what I would call the strengths of the partners can have some negative impact. For example, we have been unable to benefit from certain financial resources which had a conditionality of a JFA¹⁰ [] as a prerequisite for accessing those funds.... You have some of the heavy weights still saying, 'We are still consulting;' contacting their...[home] governments on issues like the joint financing arrangement and also other issues pertaining to this.... So the end result is you don't get as much as you would have, and that affects programme implementation (GOE2, May 09).

The commonly held view on the power of DPs to revise their financial commitments to programmes at will was also shared by another government official, who revealed the burden of unfulfilled financial pledges that the Ministry of Finance had to shoulder in attempting to procure alternative means of funding:

This does impact negatively on the sector because there are some partners who want to religiously follow the principles of [the] SWAp...so they may not release much money. ...At the end of the day, it becomes a problem on the part of the Ministry of Finance on financing those particular problems (GOF1, May 09).

As has been established, the timing of education programmes must be tied to the school calendar if they are to be effective. However, according to the findings of this study, centrally, DPs tended to work to different timescales from those originally agreed upon with the government, which accentuated the government's dependency on them. Moreover, any inconsistency in funding could have adverse effects on programme outcomes. Government officials emphasized concerns around the unpredictability of the receipt of funds, a situation that led to the failure to accord the government control over budget implementation. Therefore, again, the manner in which such power was exercised in this partnership shows that it was not in keeping with the accepted notion of a SWAp or the Paris Declaration framework (Hyden, 2008).

¹⁰ Joint financing arrangement.

8.9 Conclusion

This Chapter has systematically examined power relations in the education SWAp partnership. It has revealed that DPs held power, the source of which emanated from the eight identified ways in which they were able to control the process and dominate a partnership highly susceptible to power relations, thus revealing a wide range of factors that affected the partnership negatively.

From the perspectives of all actors, it is evident that money and resources constituted the main source of power relations in this SWAp process. Accordingly, DPs that donated more money to the government created an imbalance of power and influenced the interactions of other actors, which adversely affected the decision-making process, including policy design and implementation. Not only was the participation of government officials affected but also that of DPs that donated less money. The engagement of this group was constrained and their status diminished as the situation tended to create some sense of inferiority and frustration. Finally, the participation of civil society was also restricted, thereby affecting its ability to fulfil its function as stipulated in the Paris Declaration and reiterated in the Accra Agenda for Action.

Evidence from all actors has shown that expertise and knowledge represented another element of power relations and played a significant role in this SWAp partnership. Through their expertise and knowledge, DPs were able to impose and influence the implementation of programmes without due regard for their relevance or effectiveness. This kind of power was also linked to level of participation – the more expertise/knowledge an actor had, the greater the engagement in this SWAp process. Since expertise/knowledge was associated with DPs and the ability to participate effectively in the SWAp process, the engagement of government officials in this very important development agenda was constrained, and, consequently, the capacity that the state was intended to develop through the SWAp process was curtailed.

Another aspect of DP expertise was that it tended to be taken for granted, hence the government overreliance on DP proficiency. This was observed to perpetuate the dominance of DPs over the education development agenda as – on the understanding

that they had the necessary knowledge/expertise – their decisions were implemented even when the government attempted to point out what it thought needed to be done. Again, knowledge/expertise as practiced in this SWAp reflected the influence of neo-liberal economic policies propagated through human capital theory in the provision of international development aid to education (Rose, 2003; Samoff, 2004), in which the World Bank manifested itself as a source of knowledge.

Actors also provided evidence that DPs controlled the SWAp agenda and decisions on education programme implementation through agency *modus operandi* as a source of power. This phenomenon was associated more with multilateral aid agencies than bilateral ones. Although individual personality as a source of power did not feature highly, it was noted that this could affect the image of the individual as well as that of the organization he or she represented. It has been noted that this source of power thrives on other factors such as the provision of money and resources, and agency *modus operandi*.

It has been found that government/agency policy as a source of power relations created conflicts of interest in policies and priorities in the SWAp process, which led to decisions being made in favour of DPs; the conditionality of aid was found to be associated with this source of power too. DPs also wielded power due to historical involvement. The period of DP engagement as another source of power is based on the assumption that they were sufficiently knowledgeable about sector issues to make informed decisions due to many years of experience supporting the country. This is associated with the economic dependence on Western nations of Malawi and other developing countries (Easterly, 2009; Samoff, 2004) that hinders them when they attempt to make independent decisions on issues of national importance. This practice is seen to contradict the principles of the SWAp and the Paris Declaration, as DPs continue to interfere in the determination of recipient government priorities, a strategy that could adversely affect aid effectiveness.

Government officials identified the degree of participation, and commitment of human resources and time as a source of power experienced in this SWAp process that restricted them in education programme decision making. DPs exercised control over

policy for those programmes to which they donated money based on their interests and withheld funds at will, which had a negative effect on the quality of implementation.

Evidence has also shown that DPs challenged the government to demonstrate greater accountability for the SWAp by allocating funds to various programmes supported by the former. However, given its limited resources, it is questionable whether the government will ever be able to operate on an equal footing with its DPs. Another dimension to this source of power was that government contribution through human resources and time devoted to the implementation of programmes was undermined due to DP non-recognition. However, the fact that the government resorted to costing and translating all human resources, hours of labour, and infrastructure into monetary value can only be viewed as a futile act of desperation.

Time management in the disbursement of funds has been found to be a unique source of the power DPs wielded in this SWAp process and one that also affected education policy negatively, DPs exercising tight control over programme funding, which led to inconsistency in the release of the money. The study found that DPs worked to different timescales to those originally agreed upon with the government, which accentuated state dependency on the DPs, left the government doubly indebted when funds did not arrive as expected, and meant that it had no choice but to beg for money from elsewhere. Such inconsistencies had a negative effect on programme outcomes, highlighting concerns around the unpredictability of funding, and which did not allow the government the control and flexibility that a SWAp was intended to provide.

Thus, in general, education policies and programmes implemented in this SWAp process, according to evidence in this Chapter, did not truly reflect national priorities because DPs manipulated the partnership through eight sources of power in order that their own priorities should be met. Evidence has demonstrated that DPs had the upper hand in decision making, rendering both government and civil society impotent. Indeed, the government's tendency to succumb to the influence of its DPs purely to obtain funding reveals not only considerable desperation due to overdependence, but also the extent of its powerlessness.

Therefore, the conduct of DPs in this partnership was also contrary to the rationale of a SWAp and the partnership prescriptions of the Paris Declaration (Buchert, 2002; Brown et al., 2001; Hamblin, 2006; Hyden, 2008). Such a situation warrants serious contemplation of the whole notion of a SWAp and the goals that the Paris Declaration framework strives to achieve, especially in light of Samoff's (2004) caution against placing greater importance on recipient government leadership and interests at the expense of DP interests in a SWAp. This poses key questions on whether the shift from the project approach to a SWAp modality has been genuine or merely a different way of doing things while DPs still maintain a strong grip on the aid agenda.

Chapter 9

Discussion: A Tangled Web of Power Relations

9.0 Introduction

The narratives in chapters 5, 6 and 8 reveal how interactions in this education SWAp partnership were dominated by unequal power relations, demonstrating that each group of actors was in some way caught up in the discourse. For example, the DPs were busy trying to pursue the interests of their own governments. Malawian government officials were also implicated in the discourse in part owing to the fact that they represented the state, but as career politicians, more importantly because the securing of funding would reveal them as significant players. At a higher national political level, obtaining sectoral funding was also noted as a sign of dynamism.

At the international level, as evidenced by the impetus for the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, proponents were also caught up in the mainstream discourse. They were perceived to operate on behalf of developing countries, but remained part of the discourse on good governance and therefore did not necessarily represent the interests of recipient governments. Therefore, although the SWAp put the recipient government in the driving seat, it remained uncomfortable due to the multitude of backseat drivers. Finally, the road on which the recipient government travelled was constructed by the international community that had initiated the SWAp and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The first section of this chapter provides a contextual analysis of power from an international development aid perspective, addressing the implications for actors in the SWAp under study. The second section examines the policy dialogue in the education SWAp partnership, and how it was affected by micro politics and the macro-policy environment. The third section discusses how power operated in this partnership. The fourth section presents a conceptual framework developed based on the theories of power examined in Chapter 3.3 and the experiences of Malawi in order to utilize in the

analysis and explanation of the implications of power for the education SWAp process. Lastly, the final section draws some conclusions based on the key arguments.

9.1 Power Shift – A Failed Attempt at International Development

Chapter 5 argued that the emergence of the Malawian education SWAp partnership was directly linked to international aid and its targets, and internal reform processes such as the PIF, PCAR and NESP; initiatives that were all implemented under the influence of global trends requiring developing countries to adopt the SWAp as a new aid modality to replace the project approach. As noted in Chapter 3, the latter was a mechanism employed by donors for delivering aid to post-independence developing countries in which they had economic interests or potential markets (Minch, 2010). Donors had the power to decide which projects were put into operation and how they were managed, which included setting up project implementation units from which they had full control of the execution and funding of their interventions (Foster, 2007).

As indicated by actors interviewed for this study, in the Malawian context, the process of adjustment to the demands of the global community tied aid to targets such as poverty reduction, EFA and the MDGs. This led to the creation of a partnership that brought together the government, DPs and CSOs/NGOs to collaborate on the formulation of an education SWAp document – thus, the NESP came into being.

This reveals that it was an act of power at the highest international community level (at which fundamental decisions are made in respect of aid to developing countries) that dictated this change of modality from the project approach to the SWAp. Aid recipient governments – including that of Malawi – had no choice but to comply by introducing appropriate reforms that aligned them to such a modality, as highlighted by participants in the present study. In this case, there was no resistance to change, actors indicating that they viewed the education SWAp partnership as a positive strategy for achieving enhanced funding to the sector, as pointed out in chapters 2 and 5.

Government officials were particularly enthusiastic about the education partnership as a significant innovation in the delivery of international aid that reinforced the SWAp and

such an alliance model as more utilitarian and egalitarian, as prescribed in the Paris Declaration of 2005, which was set to become a definitive pronouncement in the history of international development assistance. Indeed, the Paris Declaration framework is characterized by a major paradigm shift that affects not only the way international aid business is transacted, but also the roles and responsibilities of each group of aid actors (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005; Hyden, 2008). The effects of this innovation are evident in the Malawian education SWAp.

Thus, the SWAp became a power mechanism that brought together DPs, government officials and civil society (each group with its distinct roles and responsibilities) as expounded in the Paris Declaration framework. Such a mechanism was vital as it dictated the nature of relations between these actors. Therefore, a change in aid modality threatened to undo the power of those who wielded it. Consequently, the shift from project approach to SWAp was characterized as a change in the mechanism that seemed to threaten the power of actors – that of DPs in particular – in the aid relationship whereby there was a clear shift from donors to the recipient government taking the lead in the development agenda (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005).

As discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 8, there was an ongoing power struggle between actors in the education SWAp partnership as they attempted to adjust to the requirements of democratic collaboration. The government was expected to take the lead and assume ownership over the development of policies and strategies as well as the coordination of the development process. However, although in principle, DPs fully subscribed to the SWAp modality and Paris Declaration framework, they were seen to continue operating according to the project approach and clinging to a sense of supremacy by wielding the eight sources of power identified by actors. These naturally placed DPs in a position of advantage over other actors and therefore influenced conduct that was contrary to the expectations of a SWAp and Paris Declaration partnership model.

According to actors, this major change threatened the power donors had over the way aid was delivered and utilized in the project approach. DP resistance was thus reflected

through efforts to perpetuate the old modality beyond the initiation of the SWAp on the pretext that given a lack of trust in government accountability and systems, it was a safe mechanism for delivering funds. However, in many ways, this change seems to have affected all groups of actors when it came to education SWAp partnership relations. The prescribed partnership model removed the power of DPs, for example, in taking the lead over policy priorities and programmes, and placed it with the government. This is one reason why government officials seemed to be positive about the SWAp from a conceptual point of view but became more frustrated when the reality on the ground did not allow them to assume their expected leadership role.

The new partnership model also empowered civil society to play a critical role in this education SWAp process in ensuring the implementation of policies that would benefit people on the ground (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). However, this study found that although acknowledged by all actors as having been accorded the role of watchdog, civil society was severely constrained in its ability to carry out such a function due to the power dynamics that obtained in this SWAp process. In spite of the requirement that all partners should operate as equals while playing distinct prescribed roles in the interests of achieving a common goal (Eyben, 2008; Hyden, 2008; Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness, 2005), this did not seem to be the case, as pointed out by various actors. Chapter 8 highlighted the power relations that emanated from eight identified sources, that is, money/resources; expertise/knowledge; agency/modus operandi; individual personality; DP government/agency policy; period of historical DP involvement; degree of participation/commitment of human resources; and time management in the disbursement of funds. Such a paradigm tended to accord a few DPs – those who donated the most money in particular – more power, influence and control over others in this SWAp partnership. This situation underscores the issue of power as it relates to international aid relations in general, a point that is highlighted by Shutt (2009) in her study of Cambodian NGOs and their international funders.

Actors also provided evidence that innovations implemented with the aim of meeting the expectations of the new modality were slow in being realized. This reveals many challenges due to a conflict of interests that was fuelled by power relations generated by those DPs who donated the most money, in terms of policies and priorities at the micro

level of the SWAp process where implementation of international aid innovations and declarations were supposed to be practised. Therefore, it is vital to address the question of whether there can be meaningful adjustment to the concept of a SWAp if DPs continue to exercise power based on the amount of money they donate, given the extent of Malawi's aid dependency – which represents a commonality with many other developing countries. The resultant inquiry must then be how to design a SWAp that is capable of more effectively reducing the power asymmetry experienced in this process.

9.2 Policy Discourse in the Education SWAp – Who Determines Policy Priorities?

9.2.1 Macro Level

Policy at country level cannot be completely divorced from global perspectives, for example, the developments in international aid that ushered in the Paris Declaration. This view was clearly articulated by actors discussed in Chapter 5 who stated that the government had to strive to achieve international targets. This study also found that actors interviewed concurred in that at the global level, all the international social progress from the end of World War Two – the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the MDGs, EFA and the FTI (Colclough, 2005) – that led to the coupling of neo-liberal economic policies with a new aid modality influenced policy at country/macro level. It is therefore not surprising to note that in Malawi, all key policy and development planning documents (PIF, NESP and MGDS) have embraced and reflected these aspects (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2001; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008; Ministry of Economic Development, 2006). As pointed out in the preceding section, it was at global level that decisions were taken to switch from the project approach to a SWAp, and it is global level prescriptions that determine who qualifies for aid and for what purposes it is intended.

Analysis of the emergence of the SWAp in Chapter 5 traced the modality to trends in international development assistance, and the corresponding linkage to targets such as the MDGs and EFA. Consequently, the education SWAp was adopted in Malawi as a

direct response to global level decisions, with several DP governments agreeing to provide aid to the country through a SWAp modality in accordance with the Paris Declaration determined at the same level to which they were signatories.

Another macro-level aspect – not explicitly highlighted in chapters 5, 6 and 8, but which was still reflected in the influence of one multilateral agency on education programmes – that was discussed in Chapter 3 is the effect neo-liberal economic theory has on the formulation of education policy and practice. Under the “New Policy Agenda”, neo-liberalism, the market and private enterprise are given prominence as efficient strategies for the provision of services and the achievement of economic growth (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Accordingly, neo-liberal economics has embraced human capital as being just as important as physical capital to economic growth, with the World Bank assuming a major role in promoting and influencing this agenda (Rutkowski, 2007; Rose, 2003).

The participation of civil society in the SWAp is recommended in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). As pointed out by CSO members, a shift in emphasis to governance precipitated the participation of civil society in this SWAp. It was considered the preferred actor as being better placed to facilitate the effective provision of services to communities and the implementation of the neo-liberal economic policies DPs promoted than was the state (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Thus, CSO members in the present study referred to their role as ensuring that the interests of the community were represented through their participation in the education SWAp.

Nevertheless, the participation of civil society in this SWAp tended to be constrained by power relations emanating from macro-level influences, as DPs seemed to exercise power over the partnership in order that their governments’ priorities should be reflected in SWAp programmes. Although civil society was empowered at a global level to play a significant watchdog role in the development agenda, due to these power dynamics, it seemed unable to fulfil this function. For example, it could not act to address the issues reflected in Section 8.5. In this instance, there seems to have been a breakdown in terms of the expectation that civil society should raise sufficient concern to correct an aid

donation anomaly that it failed to meet. Indeed, there was an observed spirit of helplessness amongst CSO members with regard to an inability to perform their role due to lack of effective communication with DPs and government officials. Yet, better relations might have more effectively facilitated their watchdog function: *‘Those of us from civil society are invited to contribute to the process, but we haven’t yet reached the level where we can go there and turn tables upside down on the programme – no way’* (CS2, May 09). This study found that the role of civil society in the SWAp process was generally suppressed and thus it could not provide the appropriate checks and balances.

At a broader level, another feature to the policy discourse is the nature and background of the people involved in the policy-making process: Who are these DPs? Whose policies and interests do they represent? What knowledge do they bring to the policy discourse? All these questions imply a power dimension that is reflected in the SWAp. As has been observed, policy dialogue and practice are influenced by a group of actors trying to promote certain global ideologies who are assumed to promote the neo-liberal agenda (Rutkowski, 2007).

This aspect was manifested by both bilateral and multilateral DPs, who tended to perpetuate such practice in the policy discourse of this education SWAp, as highlighted in chapters 5, 6 and 8. These DPs acted as conduits of power that flowed through the partnership and facilitated the incorporation of their governments and agencies’ policy priorities in SWAp documents. The urgency with which they wished to fulfil this role was evident in the way DPs conducted themselves, as exemplified in Section 8.5.

A good deal of the power relations experienced in this SWAp partnership resulted from the conflict of interests between DPs and the government where policy and priorities were concerned. This raised some doubts as to whether DP agencies and/or their governments fully subscribed to the requirements of international development aid demanded by a SWAp modality.

At a national level, as part of the global agenda, recipient governments are required to formulate relevant policies that reflect their efforts to fulfil the global agenda such as EFA and the MDGs. In order to achieve effective utilization of aid, recipient

governments have been accorded responsibility by the Paris Declaration framework to set their own priorities so that aid addresses real issues on the ground in registering progress towards achievement of international targets.

However, as pointed out earlier, the major challenge to the government under study was that it could not effectively articulate its national priorities in the policy process without being overtaken by DP influence. Heavy dependency on international aid hindered the realization of that: *‘When it comes to focusing on priority areas, a partner with more resources influences more policy in that area’ (DPM3, Jan. 09)*. This study found that power in the SWAp partnership was wielded by DPs’ control over the decision-making process and, consequently, the accommodation of their policy priorities. Accordingly, based on the evidence discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 8, it may be concluded that government priorities had not yet been fully reflected in policy or strategy documents.

9.2.2 Micro Level

As observed in Chapter 8, interaction at the micro level seems to have been adversely affected by a wide array of factors that revealed a conflict between principles and practice; how the SWAp was conceived at global level and the reality on the ground where it was put into practice at the grassroots level. The distinct roles ascribed to DPs, such as providing aid and technical expertise to the government, tended to create a clear division between who was important in the policy-making process and those who were not.

Several issues around funding as a source of power (see Chapter 8.1) – as well as other sources of power – arose in the discourse that influenced this education SWAp at micro level. The government’s position seems to have been compromised by those DPs who tended to compete with the government to get their policy interests and priorities reflected in the NESP. This created tension in the interactions and an imbalance in the participation of actors. This also appears to have introduced notions of superiority and inferiority amongst those DPs who donated more money and those who donated less respectively.

Such a situation ran contrary to the principles of the SWAp partnership whereby all partners were supposed to be equal. Yet, this study found that each actor endeavoured to protect his or her own country or agency interests, and that those with the strongest economic muscle prevailed over others. Thus, neo-liberal economic policies tended to take priority over those of the Government of Malawi. It is at this level that the macro-political and policy environment met with the micro-political environment.

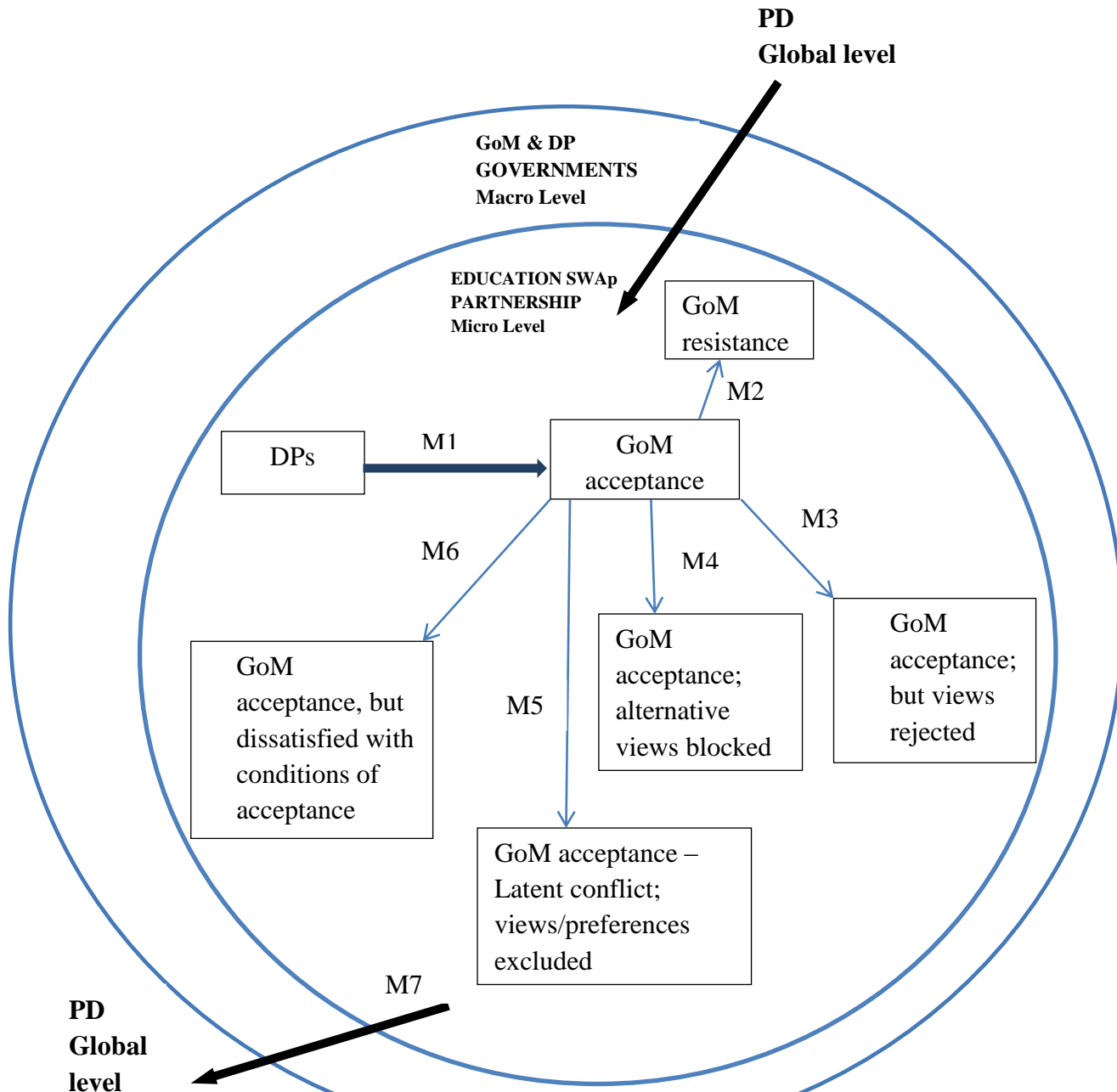
The emphasis in the SWAp partnership, as defined in the Paris Declaration and reaffirmed in the Accra Agenda for Action, is on government leadership and ownership in determining sector priorities. Therefore, the SWAp is viewed as a dramatic reform, exemplified in the partnership model, from one that reflects “power over” – as evinced by unequal utilitarian experience and charisma – to “power with” – as manifested in a democratic model such as the SWAp partnership in which everyone is intended to act as an equal (Hyden, 2008; Eyben, 2008). Consequently, evidence on the practice of this SWAp process raises doubts as to whether the original power holders really wanted change to occur in the prescribed way or whether they expected it to be different.

Incidentally, if such an innovative modality fails to achieve aid effectiveness, there is a danger that the original power holders (the DPs) might openly put the blame for any failure on the recipient country and revert to their old ways of implementing assistance, as observed by Easterly (2007). Indeed, as observed in the present study, the shift to the SWAp, which was meant to realize a more effective aid modality, seems to have generated some strong waves amongst the principal actors in the policy discourse, a development that could have a negative impact and leave the aspiration of aid effectiveness difficult to achieve.

9.3 Conceptual Framework – The Exercise of Power in the SWAp

Based on the theories and approaches to power on one hand, and narratives on power relations (as discussed in Chapter 8) on the other, this section presents a model of power as it was conceived and exercised in the Malawian education SWAp partnership. A conceptual framework developed for this purpose is thus utilized to explain the exercise

and implications of power, as drawn from practical examples of this partnership process.

Figure 9.1: Conceptual Framework**Key:**

DP = Development partner

GoM = Government of Malawi

M = Mechanism

PD = Paris Declaration

M1 = GoM acceptance under duress due to money/resources; expertise/knowledge; agency style/modus operandi; individual personalities; DP government/agency policy; period of DP involvement; degree of participation/commitment of human resources and time; management of time for disbursement of funds + DPs

M2 = GoM resistance due to collective power: GoM + PD (rarely occurs)

M3 = GoM acceptance under pressure of attractiveness of funding, DP expertise, and the rejection of GoM preferences

M4 = GoM acceptance due to additional funding + DP facilitation, but GoM views blocked through failure in decision making: GoM alternative views blocked

M5 = GoM acceptance due to additional funding + DP facilitation, but GoM views suppressed/excluded: Latent Conflict

M6 = GoM acceptance due to money, but dissatisfied with conditions and clearly expressed its views/preferences: Reconceptualization of SWAp

M7 = GoM and DP concord due Paris Declaration; global political dominance; humanitarian obligations: DP- and GoM-sustained SWAp

9.4 The Flow of Power

According to actors in this SWAp partnership, power was perceived in possessive terms based on eight identified sources of power that DPs held and used to and get the government to comply with what they wanted. These eight sources of power were money/resources; expertise/knowledge; agency style/modus operandi; individual personality; DP government/agency policy; period of historical DP involvement; degree of participation/commitment of human resources; and management of time for disbursement of funds. Money was identified as being the most dominant. Chapter 8 enumerated how each was perceived as a source of power that DPs wielded in this partnership. In such a conception, the eight sources of power combined to form a mechanism that DPs used to get the government, and/or other DPs and civil society to accept what they wanted done, as reflected in the conceptual framework (Figure 9.1). Therefore, this subsection builds on this model to elaborate the conception and exercise of power in this partnership, and explore its implications for this SWAp process and the education sector as a whole.

Although this basic conception of power in possessive terms does not strictly agree with Foucault (1991) – who avoids viewing power primarily as an entity to be possessed by any particular individual or group – the principle of its transmission is not completely in contradiction with the Foucauldian analysis of the flow of power from all points (Denegri-Knott, 2004; Foucault, 1991). What DPs in the present study had at their disposal through the eight sources of power that they could call upon whenever appropriate could be interpreted further as an ability when viewed from Lukes' expanded concept of power as a capacity to be held and used whenever necessary (Lukes, 2006).

9.4.1 Determining Programmes and Programme Strategies vs. Expertise/Knowledge

Chapter 8 discussed how DPs were perceived to wield power in order to achieve their objectives in this SWAp process. For example, the expertise/knowledge that DPs were expected to provide as part of their role in the partnership constituted one of the sources

of power they wielded to persuade the government to accept and implement the School Health and Nutrition Programme. In this particular case, the DP initially used such power to get its way by pointing out that the programme had been successful elsewhere. The DP later backed this up with money/resources as another source of power in order to sway the government's decision to accept the programme.

Thus, a combination of two mechanisms (M1 and M3 in the conceptual framework in Figure 9.1) was used to get the government's acceptance. Although the government seemed to have its own views and preferences in respect of this programme, they were superseded by those of the DP when the financial element was brought into play. The DP made it plain to the government that the money would be readily available if it agreed to implement the programme according to the preferences of the donor. Motivated by money, government officials thus allowed the DP to influence the decision-making process that led to the implementation of the programme according to the donor's prescription.

As demonstrated in the conceptual framework, government views on this programme were suppressed, which in turn precluded the articulation of grievances and shaped its perceptions into acceptance due to its attraction to funding. Therefore, the government's interests were excluded, which precipitated an "observable conflict" according to Lukes' (2006) three-dimensional view of power (first dimension). The DP used both expertise/knowledge and money as mechanisms to gain control over the policy dialogue and persuade government officials to comply with its wishes, as exemplified by the following quotation:

Agency DPMI would do some research, perhaps elsewhere, whether within sub-Saharan Africa, or Asia or wherever. They draw their evidence and they will come to you and say, 'We have tried this and that, and this is now the agenda... If you want to move forward with your programmes, yes, we have money, but if you want to get this money we recommend that you also look at this particular programme.' A case in point is the current School Health and Nutrition Programme (GOE2, May 09).

The study found that the programme had encountered some difficulties in effective implementation due to a lack of expertise in the field of health on the part of the

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. When one takes into consideration the roles and responsibilities of actors in a SWAp, the two sources of power utilized in this case represent the main obligations of DPs in such a modality; therefore, they should not have been used to block government views. Yet, programmes and implementation strategies seem to have been imposed on the government, thus reflecting DP policy interests and priorities rather than responding to local circumstances on the ground. It is therefore questionable whether the implementation of this programme could contribute towards aid effectiveness and the achievement of international targets.

9.4.2 Policies that Reflect DP Priorities – the Ills of Financial Power

DPs also exercised their financial power in other instances. The study found that DPs used financial mechanism M1 to persuade the government to cancel a two-year pre-service training programme for primary school teachers in favour of a one-year in-service programme so that they could use the funds saved for the rehabilitation of teacher training colleges. The government in turn expressed its views, revealing dissatisfaction with such a DP policy. In this case, the government seems to have reached an internal consensus and expressed its views on the teacher training programme, but DPs used M6 to continue to exclude government views and preferences.

Therefore, according to the conceptual framework, the prevention of the formation of grievances or possibility of withdrawal did not apply because even though such protestation was expressed and maintained, there was ultimate acquiescence because the desire to get money into the sector proved to be stronger than any objections to the practicability of the programme. This situation does not exactly represent latent conflict, M5, as there was an overt clash between the two different policy preferences (Lukes, 2006) and the government made its opposing views clear, although they were excluded in the final decision and the DPs preference prevailed, as noted in the following quotation:

In some cases where government would have liked to have a teacher training programme which would run for two years, donors would say, 'no, run a training programme for one year, and we will put the rest of the money towards rehabilitation of TTCs [teacher training colleges],' instead of training our teachers. So, in terms of priorities, we wanted more teachers and not more structures in teacher training colleges; that is not what we wanted (GOE3, May 09).

Another example of DPs exercising power in the partnership to set sector priorities instead of allowing the government to do so can be seen in the following example, whereby life skills education was added to the primary curriculum as a non-examinable subject against the express wishes of the government, which again bowed to the DPs' will in order to get money into the sector:

In terms of what to include in the curriculum, you see that they would push a lot on life skills education and then, at the same time, they would dictate [that] this shouldn't be examined. Our context is different; [if] you don't examine a subject, that subject is not given any weight at all. But because it is a donor dictating, our priorities took second place (GOE3, May 09).

Again, there was an open conflict of interests between the DPs and the government: based on the evidence, the government's views were spelt out but excluded when the final decision was made. According to interviewed government officials, the unfortunate reality was that although important, the subject was not receiving due attention from either teachers or students because it was not examinable, and the risk of students failing to acquire the intended life skills was consequently high.

In the above two cases, the government seems to have been dissatisfied with the decision-making process, having expressed its views, which in both instances were excluded. Thus, money was a major factor that tended to dictate government acceptance of DP domination in decision making.

Evidence from this study shows that DPs had the greater say in the SWAp partnership; controlled the direction of interaction and allocation of resources; influenced the policy dialogue and agenda; dominated the decision-making process; influenced programmes;

and tied the release of funds to government acceptance of their choice of programmes. It was found that DPs were able to achieve this largely because of the hard cash they brought to the SWAp process. Such exercise of power through two sources (money/resources and expertise/knowledge) seems to have led to the implementation of programmes that did not reflect government priorities but those of the DPs.

This may be interpreted as having weakened the government's decision-making position in this SWAp partnership, which contradicted the Paris Declaration framework in its promotion of the consideration of recipient government priorities if aid were to be effective. It is evident from the present study that programmes imposed on the Government of Malawi did not respond to local needs. Indeed, the whole notion of DPs having technical expertise to bring to the government seems to have been exaggerated and taken for granted, as is evident in the examples of programmes that, from the government's point of view, did not seem to address the needs of the sector.

From evidence on the way power was conceived and wielded in this education SWAp, it is clear that there were other cases in which DPs utilized their agency style or *modus operandi* as a source of power (M1). Accordingly, DPs seem to have exercised power that placed them in a prominent position that was widely recognized, for example, the DP as a knowledge bank. Evidence shows that this allowed DPs to assume a monitoring role in the implementation of FTI funds as indicated in 8.3.

Thus, DPs with certain agencies accorded themselves power due to their agency style or *modus operandi*, which was associated with expertise/knowledge in the conduct of their business and seems to have made them more powerful than others. DPs from one agency had power over actors from other agencies that expressed interest in monitoring the implementation of the FTI. Evidence indicates that the first DP manipulated the situation to its advantage to exclude its rivals from the competition and gained the position.

Actors in the present study confirmed that that agency style or *modus operandi* (M1) was used by DPs to wield power over policy and programme priorities in the education

sector. Actors also argued that this source of power tended to favour DP interests over those of the government. Based on the conceptual framework, according to Lukes' (2006) three-dimensional view of power, such manoeuvring represents latent conflict (M5).

9.4.3 Skewed Participation and Unequal Status

The study found that power exercised in this partnership adversely affected the participation and status of actors, and that some DPs seem to have used their financial muscle to acquire positions of influence (M1). The following example reveals the control over the decision-making process exerted by one DP, which frustrated other actors due to the consequent skewed participation and seems to have kept some DPs away from SWAp coordination meetings because they found the overbearing influence of the DP in question intolerable as indicated in 8.1.

Thus, participation in this SWAp partnership seems to have been affected by an imbalance of power created by one DP who donated more money to the government than others did. The influence of a single person over the decision-making process frustrated other DPs whose views seem to have been excluded from final decisions. The study found that these actors protested against such domination by not attending meetings and consequently failing to express their views.

However, in a similar situation, there was a different reaction by another group of DPs, who seem to have resorted to withdrawal from meetings for fear of a dominant DP.

In both cases, DPs exercised power by wielding financial muscle as a mechanism (M1 in the conceptual framework) to persuade the government to acquiesce to their policies, a ploy that also affected other DPs. This may not necessarily be conceived as latent conflict, since these actors seemed to avoid making decisions to which they were adverse; thus utilizing the strategy of non-decision making as means of blocking alternative views or values (M4) due to the domination of one actor in the SWAp process (Lukes, 2006).

Another situation emphasized the unequal status of DPs due to the exercise of the power of funding, which made those who donated less feel that their contribution was not appreciated:

There are some negative energies that are exerted in terms of power relations in the education SWAp process. If I am a partner, I wouldn't want to be demeaned by a bigger partner to the ministry. I would like to be treated as an equal because whatever I am doing forms part of the integral part of the whole (GOE3, May 09).

As indicated by the evidence provided above, the exercise of power by DPs who used money as a mechanism (M1 in the conceptual framework) seems to have created a sense of superiority amongst those who donated more money and one of inferiority with regard to those who gave less. This in turn also seems to have affected the participation of others in the decision-making process, and constrained the formation of opinions and grievances (M5) in terms of those who gave less, a situation that was expressed as latent conflict. In short, DPs who donated the most money seem to have acquired more say in the SWAp partnership; controlled interactions between the actors in it; and dominated policy to the extent that engagement was skewed.

Interviewees also contended that agency style or *modus operandi* as a source of power in this partnership tended to confer a sense of superiority. Some DPs seem to have influenced the policy dialogue, and allowed their political interests to determine how aid was disbursed and programmes or subsectors funded – behaving to some extent as if they were both principals and agents when such conduct is analyzed from a principal-agent theory perspective. The principal-agent theory deals with a relationship or a contract between two parties that come together in order to achieve a common endeavour or goal. What becomes critical in a principal-agent problem is how to deal with the asymmetric information between the agent and the principal and its subsequent dilemma of getting the agent to behave in the way the principal wants where the agent has an informational advantage over the principal, and yet may have different interests from the principal (Takahashi, 2007). The DPs in question tended not only to assume ownership of the process through which they donated money, but also controlled and

managed it in terms of access to knowledge and the setting of agendas on programme implementation; thus, behaving as if they had all the information necessary to put interventions into practice (Vaubel et al., 2005).

In addition to the various ways in which power can be realized based on the conceptual framework, there are multiple permutations that represent different reactions to power relations that do not necessarily fit into this framework. One example of such exercise of power is where DPs challenged the government to commit funds to programmes that were initially supported by donors, a mechanism that could also constrain local participation.

The study found that DPs exploited their degree of participation, and commitment of human resources and time as a source of power (M1). This was identified as a different type of power as it tended to directly address how the government might attain legitimacy and control over sector programmes – in accordance with the Paris Declaration framework – by participating effectively or on an equal basis with DPs, which should have been achieved through the allocation and commitment of financial, human and time resources. However, the government's position in terms of decision making on the implementation of, for example, the PCAR was highly compromised by its failure to commit funds to the programme. According to evidence, this seems to have occurred through the exclusion of government views on the manner in which the PCAR was implemented, which confirms that financial aid played a key role in influencing the participation of actors in this partnership.

While DPs challenged the government to commit funds to programmes, they did not necessarily recognize these contributions through the provision of material assistance such as the physical infrastructure, human resources and staff time involved in programme implementation. Such a phenomenon seems to have forced the government to transfer these elements into monetary cost. Thus, although this DP exercise of power triggered a reflexive action from the government, it also challenged the latter to begin allocating funds.

Interestingly, just as it was found that DPs donating the most money had the most influence, evidence also shows that greater equality in the allocation of money to programmes led to enhanced participation. This further underscores the role money played in SWAp power relations. However, financial power could also continue to limit government participation, given the financial resources that the country had and was able to make available to its development programmes when compared to those of the DPs. Therefore, it can be anticipated that the imbalance of power in this partnership is bound to be experienced for a long time yet unless donors address the issue of power relations that comes along with their money.

Another source of the power DPs wielded in this partnership involved time management in the disbursement of funds to programmes (M1). The study found that the exercise of such power seems to have resulted in DPs withholding funds, which had implications for the timely implementation of programmes as well as its quality. As opposed to situations in which power was exercised through financial aid, in this case, power was wielded by failing to allocate funding that had been agreed for programme implementation:

Sometimes, we have situations, for example, at the beginning of the year, partners are stringent with their funds, but at the end of the year, they are lavish and say, 'We have so much to spend – how can you spend this money so that it doesn't go back to our capital?' But, we didn't plan for that; what we planned for, we did it in a manner that was not planned because they were stringent with their money. But at [in] the end they realized they kept so much with them... And we have already done things in a manner that we did not want to do (GOE1, May 09).

In relation to the exercise of power by withholding or failing to deploy funds as planned (M1), the study found that this seems to have compromised the quality of programme implementation, which had repercussions for the outcome. Evidence provided by actors indicates that the DP who agreed to fund teacher training did not keep its promise and withheld the money. This programme thus seems to have been highly compromised due to the consequent shortfall in the budget. The funding decision does not seem to have taken into account the importance of adequate teacher training to the learning process

and the resultant negative outcomes for students. The following quotation details what happened to the implementation of the PCAR:

A very good example of a big let-down by the donors is the PCAR experience. When we [had] conceptualized it and developed it, and finally took it to the classroom for implementation, the plans were that after every two weeks since it is a new curriculum, teachers would be exposed to continuous professional development [CPD] at zonal level. And at [the] planning stage, the donor committed that they are going to support CPD through and through until we roll out all the eight classes. But to our shock, the very first class we introduced it to, in Standard 1, we trained teachers for four weeks; after those four weeks money stopped coming for CPD. That was a big let-down, yet teachers were exposed to a new outcome-based curriculum. They had orientation for just three days; an orientation that [was] supposed to take five full days took only three days and, in some cases, only two and a half days, and they called it three days. You know what, that compromised a lot in terms of content, pedagogy, principles and values (GOE3, May 09).

In another programme, the government and its DPs planned to implement an early childhood development (ECD) initiative for five-year-old children as a primary reception facility that was known as P Class (P for preparatory) in order to introduce them to school routine. However, the government failed to implement P Class in spite of having developed a curriculum because the DPs seemingly exercised power by not releasing the agreed funds. As a compromise, part of the P Class curriculum was taken and compressed in order to have it taught in the first term of Standard 1 of primary education. In the event, a whole term of the Standard 1 curriculum was consumed to pave the way for an Early Childhood Development component that was originally planned to take a year. One government official commented:

It was a new phenomenon; therefore, the donor felt that it was better to start with Standard 1 rather than the P Class. Donors were not sure of our capacity... I wouldn't [couldn't] pinpoint [it] – the ministry did not want to take the risk when implementing, and the other issue was resources (GOE1, May 09).

The exercise of power whereby DPs withheld agreed funds for the implementation of programmes tended to lead to the unpredictability of aid, thereby making it difficult for the government to exercise control over sector initiatives. This not only compromised the quality of implementation, but also hindered the initiation of essential new

programmes, both of which affected the degree of aid effectiveness that the Paris Declaration sought to achieve. These shortcomings could also adversely affect sector performance, as programmes failed to address issues adequately on the ground. Moreover, this type of power tended to put the government in a very weak position with little control over sector programmes or funds. Central to the notion of a SWAp is the commitment of funds to the sector in order to make aid predictable, and that the government should have greater control over sector programmes in accordance with the Paris Declaration framework. Yet, this study found that the exercise of power in this SWAp was not consistent with such a notion.

9.4.4 Headhunting Civil Servants – Jeopardizing the SWAp Leadership

This study also found that power exercised in the partnership negatively affected the progress of the SWAp process when DPs drew upon their deep pockets to recruit some of the most brilliant government officers to work for the NGOs sponsored by the former. Such headhunting of civil servants also contributed to the frequent high-level reshuffles in the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, which, in turn, perpetrated government dependency on DP expertise and leadership. The following statements not only illustrate the extent of this negative influence on the SWAp partnership, but also the frustration shared amongst the actors:

We have seen a number of people, some of the best people of the ministry for the last one, two years, being poached by, particularly, Agency DP2 and Agency DP2's country firms hired by Agency DP2, or funded by Agency DP2, to do different consultancies in [the] education sector. They hire the people from the ministry...and they offer them ten times as much as they get in the civil service at the moment. And the last [latest] one to be poached is the Director of Planning, Dr Dambo [pseudonym] (DP3, Oct. 10).

One problem is that there is [a] high turnover of PSs in the Ministry of Education. This limits them and they depend on DPs, who have more knowledge and information. Likewise, there is [a] high turnover of directors, for example, Dr Jamu [pseudonym] replaced by Dr Dambo [pseudonym] (DPM3, Jan. 09).

The lack of leadership on the part of government can be attributed to an extent to the frequent changes in the leadership of the ministry, particularly at the

minister and PS levels. This has obviously slowed down the process, with the result that this process, which started as far back as years ago, is not [has not been] completed (DPM1, March 09).

Government officials recruited by this DP agency were offered handsome salaries, which obviously constituted an incentive. However, this exercise of power through the headhunting of civil servants negatively affected the progress of the education SWAp process. It also seems to have contributed to the problem of the high turnover of top ministry staff – personnel who were exceptional not only in terms of providing SWAp leadership at ministry level, but also with regard to capacity building in order to avoid overreliance on DP expertise.

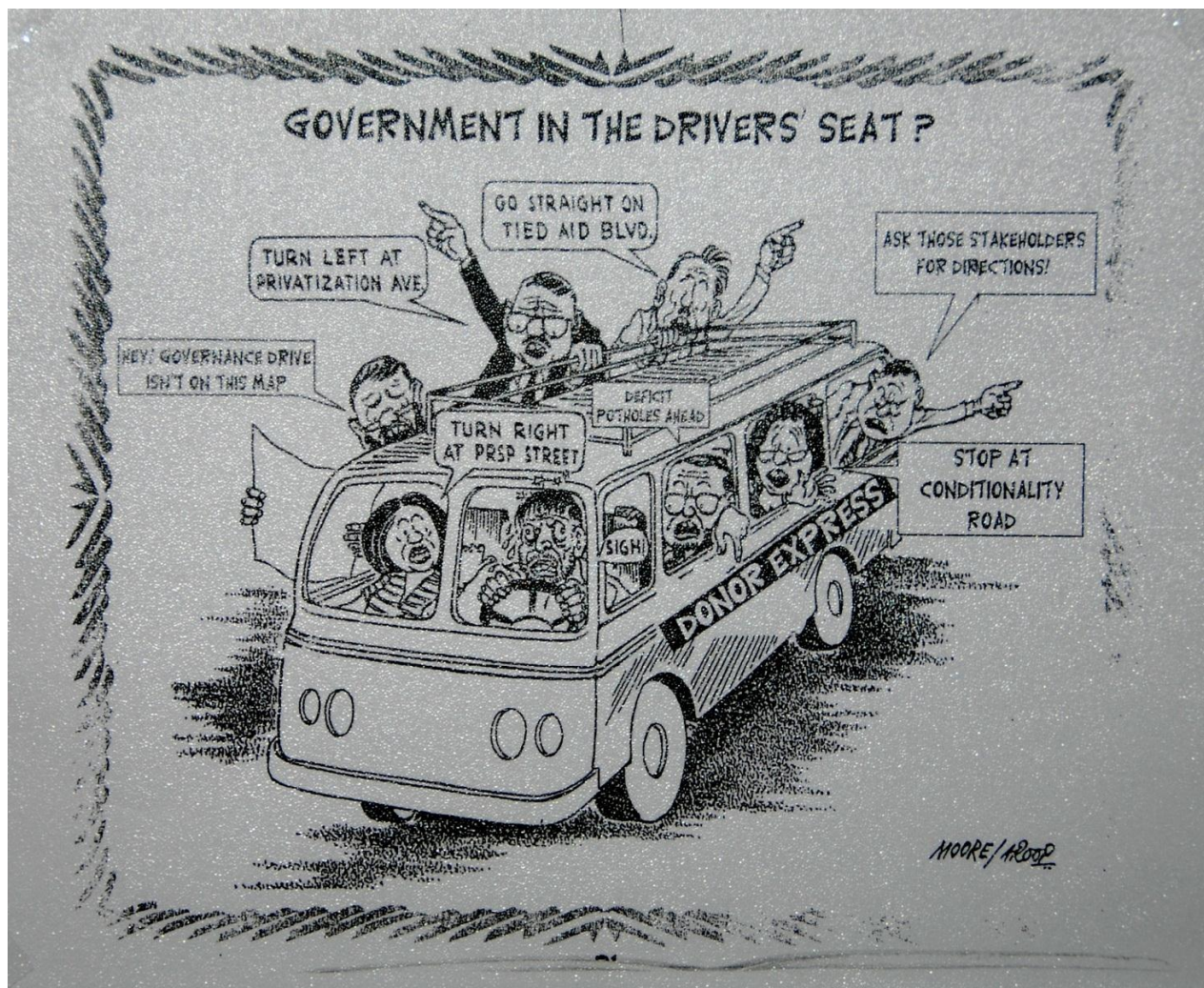
Arguably, this kind of conduct could be construed as a means of weakening the leadership role of the government and its ownership of the whole education SWAp process merely through a DP desire to maintain dominance over the development agenda. In this situation, the government would remain dependent on its DPs in terms of knowledge, expertise and leadership, especially so when donors are also able to flex considerable financial muscle, as noted in chapters 5, 6 and 8. Regrettably, such a scenario might lead to a reversion to the project approach.

9.5 Conclusion

The evidence in this chapter on how power was conceptualized and exercised in this education SWAp partnership poses a big challenge to the realization of the model as defined by the Paris Declaration owing to Malawi's heavy dependence on financial aid. Indeed, government influence in this SWAp process was heavily compromised by power relations in the partnership; given that DPs wielded power by means of mechanisms M1 to M6 (including the eight sources examined in Chapter 8) in the conceptual framework, which led to the exclusion of state interests in important policy decisions. Moreover, in their exercise of power, DPs were able to coerce the government into accepting decisions or acting in a way it did not wish to because of the pressure it was under to secure funding. The policy dialogue was driven by a few DPs who donated more money to the government than others did, a strategy that left many

others frustrated. This model of power was observed and captured by an independent journalist in the following cartoon, which illustrates the way in which the Malawian education SWAp ultimately played out.

Figure 9.2: Donor Express Bus



Source: exact source unknown, but was taken from a newspaper

Figure 9.2 illustrates that the way in which power is exercised in a SWAp – as evidenced by the Malawian experience – is inconsistent with the modality as it was redefined in the Paris Declaration framework. Rather, the recipient government, which is supposed to be in the driving seat, tends to be put in an impossible position due to all the backseat DP drivers in the SWAp process (the bus in the cartoon), who try to wield

power and exert pressure in order to reflect their home governments' interests and agendas in development policies and strategies.

This depiction shows that DPs tend to cling to the power model that characterized the project approach. Conversely, the road on which the government drives is determined by the international community – which was a common criticism of the management of development aid under the project approach because it denied the recipient government access to the centre of control (Hamblin, 2006); and DPs try to ensure that their policies take precedence over recipient government priorities and needs, which are often excluded, by employing different mechanisms that incorporate the eight sources of power.

Consequently, due to power relations; the types of programmes promoted by some DPs; the quality of implementation that continued to be eroded by DP control of funding; and a failure to uphold principles aimed at aligning aid with national priorities, it is questionable whether the interventions under study could contribute meaningfully to the realization of international targets.

When considered in terms of power relations in this SWAp, civil society was left with no real identity in the development agenda, a position that ran contrary to the expectations of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008). A better understanding is therefore required in respect of macro-level political decisions that have implications for practical application at the micro level. The Malawian experience also serves as a reminder that care must be taken not to set unrealistic goals or standards given the reality on the ground.

The manner in which power was wielded in this education SWAp process – which was proportionate to the amount of money donated – not only ran contrary to the principles of the SWAp as a more democratic, egalitarian type of alliance in which all actors were intended to operate as equals, but, more importantly, it was not conducive to the conduct of a partnership that could be expected to enhance funding to the sector. These findings are corroborated by Samoff's (1996) observation that there has been little change in SWAp relationships. These conclusions inevitably pose the question of

whether the SWAp is just another tool for powerful developed countries and erstwhile colonial masters to set and control the development agenda of weak developing countries; a continuation of the process claimed by Escobar (1995), who provides evidence of how development policies have proved to be instruments of control equivalent to those of the colonial era. Therefore, it is highly contestable as to whether a move to address these challenges at a higher level than that of the donor government would bring about a positive change in the SWAp partnership, given that such a policy could merely entail the same people meeting to decide on the issues.

Although the SWAp differs fundamentally and conceptually from the project approach, the reality has shown that nothing much has changed. Nevertheless, it is hoped that through a process of continuous refinement the modality will prove to be more effective in the long term. However, given the current situation as evidenced by this study, the big question is whether such an aspiration can ever be realized. Indeed, while the process remains subject to power relation challenges that might affect the achievement of aid effectiveness and the meeting of international targets based on the principles of the modality, it has been noted that the SWAp partnership still represents a reasonable collaboration mechanism for all aid actors to work together towards a common goal.

As observed in Chapter 5, based on a conceptual understanding of the modality, this was a unanimous desire amongst all the actors in the education SWAp under study. Thus, in terms of its principles, the SWAp is still regarded as a promising collaboration mechanism that all aid actors can employ in order to work together towards the common goal of achieving aid effectiveness. Therefore, perhaps it is time to reconceptualize the whole notion of the SWAp through a process of critical reflection on all the factors that come into play.

Finally, according to mechanism M7 in the conceptual framework, all actors in the SWAp under study seemed committed to continue operating in a partnership in which they were bound by global and macro-level requirements – e.g. those stipulated by the Paris Declaration framework – as an act of power at a structural level to which their governments and agencies subscribed. Thus, the SWAp becomes self-sustaining and actors' reactions to power relations are largely regulated by this certainty.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.0 Introduction

This study, which aimed to critically analyse partnerships in the Malawian education SWAp process and determine how they influenced it, has examined the nature and structure of partnership collaboration amongst various DPs, government officials, and CSOs/NGOs from the development of the PIF to the initiation of the NESP. This chapter thus presents a summary of the main findings of the study, the contribution of the thesis, and the implications of the findings for SWAps in Malawi and beyond. It also provides areas for future research based on the findings of the study.

10.1 Summary of Research Findings and Contribution to Knowledge

The SWAp partnership was central to this study. Therefore, efforts to gain an insight into the origin of the SWAp in the interests of a better understanding of relationships around this new aid modality in relation to the Malawian context as well as others featured prominently. This thesis links the SWAp to changes in international development cooperation, in respect of education in particular, which took place in the 1990s. It also identifies the failure of the project approach as being largely responsible for such changes. Accordingly, the SWAp is a critical partnership strategy for funding sectors in developing countries based on the conceptual understanding that it will prove to be a more effective aid modality. The education SWAp in Malawi provided the focus of this study, being a typical basis for partnership collaboration in the wake of the 2005 Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness.

Chapter 2 identified the context of the Malawian education reform. It highlighted the changes in international development assistance and their link to the initiation of internal education reform in the country. The chapter also identified challenges in the Malawian public education system in terms of funding, access, quality, equity, and

internal efficiency. It discussed the reasons for adopting the new modality in expectation that a SWAp partnership would address these challenges. The funds released through this partnership were ultimately intended to assist the government to achieve the international targets of EFA and MDGs.

Chapter 3 narrated the historical circumstances that led to a shift from the project-based approach, as characterized by a totalitarian style whereby donors had full control over funds and implementation, to the SWAp as a more egalitarian and democratic modality for funding developing countries. While acknowledging the necessity of a SWAp, this chapter also highlighted the challenges that many other countries have experienced due to deviation from the conceptual understanding of a SWAp. The chapter thus cautioned the need to be mindful of the frequent disparity between theory and practice where the SWAp is concerned. It described a modality conceived in the rarefied atmosphere of the Paris Declaration, with its academic global prescriptions, which bore little relevance to the reality on the ground or the accompanying implications for macro-level policy formulation and micro-level implementation.

This chapter also revealed evidence of the influence of neo-liberal economic policies in terms of international development assistance. It highlighted the role of the World Bank in promoting these policies in the education development agenda through human capital theory. This is based on the notion that in acquiring knowledge and skills, individuals are regarded as capital in the process of production and such acquisition as an investment. It associates the incorporation of civil society in the international development agenda with the influence of the same neo-liberal economic policies, which promote the transfer of the economy from public to private ownership based on the belief that this increases government efficiency and contributes to the improved well-being of the nation.

Finally, the chapter highlighted various power theories, given that the SWAp partnership is not only a social entity that is prone to power relations, but also the fact that the very introduction of the modality was an act of power in the realm of international development aid.

Chapter 4 discussed the methodology used for the investigation, which facilitated an understanding of the actors' perspectives on how partnership interactions affected the education SWAp. It described the social constructivist philosophical framework used to explore the views of DPs, government officials, and CSOs and NGOs as actors in the education SWAp process.

Chapter 5 highlighted the experiences of the Malawian education SWAp process from the perspectives of actors on the emergence of its partnership. The thesis argues that the emergence of this SWAp partnership can be directly linked to international aid targets such as poverty reduction, EFA and the MDGs, as well as internal reform processes such as the PIF and PCAR, which were initiated under the influence of international aid trends that required developing countries to adopt the SWAp as a new aid modality to replace the project approach.

The thesis further contends that the partnership for the education SWAp process – which brought together the government, DPs, NGOs and CSOs to collaborate in the development of a SWAp document, the NESP – emerged from the process of adjusting to the demands of a global community that tied aid to international development targets. It was from the small thematic groupings initiated during the development of the PIF that this partnership evolved into a single large education SWAp alliance, with the inclusion of civil society as one of the main actors assuming a watchdog role.

A key finding of this study was that minimum capacity – a “capacity base” – is required if the government is to engage meaningfully in a SWAp even though such a modality intrinsically includes state capacity building. The study found that capacity was an area of great concern, particularly in terms of the ability of government officials to engage in a SWAp process according to the principles of ownership and leadership – as a certain amount of capacity was required to lead the SWAp process by bringing together DPs and civil society, and clearly advancing government priorities. This means that the government should have had a minimum level of capacity in order to engage meaningfully in a SWAp process that itself involved the further development of state capacity. However, evidence shows that government capacity was found to be wanting right from the start. This finding calls for a redefinition of the minimum necessary

capacity level for a government to engage in or implement a SWAp. This finding further evidences how lack of capacity is structurally determined. The dependency of the government on its DPs is such that even when it has been engaged from the initiation of the SWAp process, as observed in the experiences of many countries, capacity is still identified as a problem at the implementation stage (Brown et al., 2001; Smith, 2005; Samoff, 2004).

Subsequent to the capacity issue per se, is concern around trust as it relates to the capacity of the government, given that lack of trust deters DPs from releasing funds through certain modalities that they perceive as risky. DPs have consistently claimed that government systems and procedures are weak even after engaging in a SWAp process. Consequently, this thesis raises another key question with regard to what should come first in order to address obvious concerns around capacity: capacity building or the initiation of the SWAp process – or simply at what stage of the SWAp should capacity building commence.

The shortfalls in partnership interaction to which it was susceptible notwithstanding, the Malawian SWAp was found to be a popular aid modality amongst actors, particularly given that most DPs still operated in the project mode. The purpose of initiating such an education policy was to implement the following qualities: improved planning, harmonization, alignment, coordination, ownership, government leadership, enhanced funding, and capacity building, the three main areas of most concern to all actors being planning, funding and harmonization.

However, the thesis suggests that there had been no significant improvement in terms of realizing these qualities, as the partnership continued to experience negative power relations in spite of the fact that there was a common understanding of the concepts of a SWAp and that the process was to be guided by the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration. For example, DPs used financial power to implement their own priorities for the development of policies and strategies, which adversely affected the SWAp process and frustrated the government as well as other actors; particularly endangering the comprehensive, coherent policy implementation and deployment of resources that the SWAp was intended to facilitate.

Chapter 6 identified several other important issues pertaining to relations and roles amongst the different actors in this SWAp partnership. DP unity in the provision of effective support to the government was hampered by elements of mistrust and an aspect of covert competition that seemed to exist amongst them due to a quest to fulfil their own government's agendas, which created a spirit of competitiveness. This further negatively affected partnership aims whereby DPs were expected to become less responsible for the SWAp as the government assumed the lead role in a context of closer interagency collaboration (Riddell et al., 2000). Therefore, this thesis questions DP integrity in the Malawian context in terms of their willingness to modify their actions and conform to the Paris Declaration to which they were signatories.

All actors in this SWAp partnership recognized the importance of avoiding duplication of efforts, hence the need for a clear definition of the role to be played by each based on its area of expertise or comparative advantage. This was critical if gaps in programme implementation were to be identified and all areas of the sector in need of support covered. Consequently, the DPs were identified with two main roles: funding provision and technical support to the government, although the former tended to cause problems around power relations.

This thesis acknowledges that pressure from the global governance and international development agenda in the context of neo-liberal economic policies obliges the incorporation of civil society in a SWAp process and that it should be identified with a watchdog role. However, the present study found that such a role was constrained. The thesis argues that although it was expected to constitute one of the main actors in the SWAp process, civil society was rarely viewed as part of the main partnership, which seemed to exist between the DPs and the government only.

The thesis contends that in the absence of effective relations that might have facilitated a meaningful system of checks and balances, civil society was restricted in its ability to function appropriately in the SWAp process, which consequently becomes an area of concern, especially given its critical role in monitoring and supervision. Moreover, when considered in terms of power relations in this SWAp, the situation of civil society

tended to leave it with no real identity in the development agenda, which calls for a better understanding of macro-level political decisions that have implications during practical application at the micro level.

This study found that role of civil society in the SWAp partnership was prescriptive to a certain extent, which left little room for it to act effectively. Thus, the thesis contends that the role of civil society in this process does not appear to have been fully assimilated or acknowledged. On the other hand, the role of the government was clear – to provide financial support and set the agenda, the latter including the identification of priority areas. However, the evidence suggests that these duties were impeded due to pressure from DPs that provided financial support – in spite of the fact that the Paris Declaration clearly assigns these roles to the recipient government.

This issue is not only critical in terms of the leadership and ownership of the education SWAp process, but also with regard to the aid effectiveness that the Paris Declaration framework emphasizes (Hyden, 2008). Therefore, this element stresses the challenges of the SWAp modality, and underscores a disparity between the SWAp rhetoric and the reality on the ground, an area also highlighted by Buchert and Epskamp (2000).

Accordingly, the thesis suggests that key issues around the role of civil society in the SWAp process require further investigation and theorization; given the Malawian context – or that of any other developing country – in which CSOs are funded by DPs and tend to be in constant competition with the government where funding is concerned. Therefore, they can easily become vulnerable to changes in state policy if they do not toe the line of the government of the day. In this regard, the crucial questions to pose are what impact does civil society have on the SWAp process; whose interests are they protecting – those of the government or the DPs who fund them – and how effective is their watchdog role.

Chapter 7 highlighted a number of factors in the education SWAp process that affected the manner in which its partnership influenced the improvement of funding to the sector. The first finding was that partnership relations negatively affected education funding, thereby posing a potential threat to both aid effectiveness and enhanced

support to the sector. This practice ran contrary to the expectations of education partners whereby coherence of funding should have been maintained and aid delivery consistent in order to allow the government more flexibility and control over plans and the implementation of sector programmes. The second finding was that the coordination of the education SWAp process also affected funding to the sector. The chapter provided evidence that financial mechanisms employed by DPs improved education funding, but this was attributed to the pool fund created around the implementation of PCAR.

The failure by DPs to adopt government systems is an area that requires further investigation in the light of the findings of evaluation reports on the implementation of the Paris Declaration (Wood et al., 2008). This chapter confirmed government optimism that a SWAp modality could improve funding to the sector, but it also found that the amount of money DPs donated negatively affected interaction in this SWAp process as it perpetrated skewed participation.

A third finding was that funding to the sector was perceived to concentrate on DPs' old projects and areas of interest. Generally, the findings in this chapter were consistent with those of the qualitative data presented in chapters 5, 6 and 8. Finally, there was clear evidence that funding to the sector was affected by several other factors.

Chapter 8 highlighted evidence in support of the contention that funding constituted the main source of power relations in this SWAp process. Accordingly, DPs that donated more money to the government created an imbalance of power and influenced the interactions of other actors, which adversely influenced the decision-making process, including policy design and implementation. This affected the participation of government officials as well that of DPs that donated less money. The engagement of the latter group was constrained and their status diminished, as the situation tended to create a sense of inferiority and frustration. However, the thesis argues that as long as those who donate the most fail to use their influence positively to minimize power relations and facilitate adherence to the principles of the Paris Declaration, the SWAp process is bound to continue to be adversely affected.

The thesis also identifies time management in the disbursement of funds as a significant source of DP power that also affected Malawian education policy negatively. DPs exercised tight control over programme funding, which led to inconsistency in the release of the money. They were also found to work to different timescales from those originally agreed upon, which accentuated government dependency on its DPs and left the former doubly indebted when funds did not arrive as expected, as it was obliged to beg for money from elsewhere. Such inconsistencies had an adverse effect on programme outcomes, highlighting concerns around the unpredictability of funding, a situation that did not allow the government the control or flexibility that a SWAp was intended to provide.

The thesis argues that DPs' own government mandates and internal systems restricted their operations in the SWAp process, which, in a sense, created conflict with their role as DPs. It was also found that even though DPs seemed to embrace the innovations a SWAp necessitated, their internal systems were too slow to change and adapt to the requirements of the modality. DP mandates and internal systems were found to cause conflict around the setting of national priorities in the SWAp process, as DPs were regarded as attempting to influence the NESP agenda to bring it in line with their respective government policies. These revelations pose the fundamental question of whether DP governments are genuinely subscribing to the Paris Declaration.

Another aspect that the thesis identifies is the difficult situation in which some DPs found themselves due to their government mandates and internal systems, which could have a negative impact on the general performance of individuals, agencies, and the entire SWAp process. Individual development workers representing DP governments found the resultant situation restraining and frustrating, particularly when operating in a competitive environment in which those who were sufficiently flexible to respond to the demands of the sector stood a better chance of being well recognized.

Chapter 9 provided evidence of the way in which power was conceptualized in this SWAp partnership, and reviewed the fashion in which it was exercised. The latter was found to be in a manner that posed a substantial challenge to the realization of the modality as defined by the Paris Declaration, which was due to the heavy dependence of

Malawi on financial aid. Indeed, the government's decision-making position in this SWAp was found to be severely compromised by power relations in the partnership that largely resulted in the exclusion of government interests from important policy decisions.

Evidence shows that the policy dialogue was driven by a few DPs who donated the most money to the government, a situation that left many other DPs frustrated. The implementation of programmes was also affected by the control DPs exercised over their money, which showed scant regard for upholding principles aimed at the alignment of aid with national priorities. The thesis argues that given such power relations in this SWAp process, it is doubtful whether the education policies and programmes executed through its partnership could contribute meaningfully to the realization of international goals and aid effectiveness. Such a contention brings into question the integrity of the SWAp, and whether it is just another tool with which powerful developed countries set and control the agenda of weak developing countries, as claimed by Escobar (1995).

This study found that the way power operated in this partnership was exercised proportionate to the amount of money donated. This runs contrary to the principles of the SWAp, which was conceived as a more democratic, egalitarian type of alliance in which all actors were intended to operate as equal partners. Yet, more importantly, a SWAp partnership is expected to enhance funding to the sector; therefore, financial aid provided by DPs should not create a power conflict. The thesis thus suggests that there is a need to address this situation through policy reform at a higher level than that of the DP.

In spite of the finding that this partnership was subject to the adverse consequences of "power to" – DPs holding sway over others by wielding the eight sources of power money/resources; expertise/knowledge; agency/modus operandi; individual personality; DP government/agency policy; period of historical DP involvement; degree of participation/commitment of human resources; and management of time for disbursement of funds, identified in Chapter 8 – that jeopardized aid effectiveness and global targets, the thesis still contends that a SWAp partnership based on internationally

recognized principles represents a reasonable collaboration mechanism through which all aid actors may work towards a common goal. As observed in Chapter 5, this was a common belief amongst all actors in this education SWAp process. However, given the evidence of this study, it is questionable whether the aspiration for such an ideal SWAp can ever be realized.

Furthermore, this study found that actors seemed committed to continuing to operate in this SWAp as they were bound by macro level requirements, for example, those of the Paris Declaration framework to which their governments and agencies subscribed. Therefore, the thesis argues that a SWAp becomes a self-sustaining modality, which, in so doing, largely regulates power relations.

Finally, the thesis argues that the manner in which power was conceptualized and exercised in the SWAp partnership under study highlights a design flaw. Although the principles of the modality were well intentioned, they failed to take into account the fact that power relations between partners in the process were not necessarily restrained merely through a commitment to use the SWAp in place of the project approach. DPs were still anxious to pursue their own government or agency interests and, given asymmetric power relations, they were always likely to prevail. Thus, the resultant question is how a SWAp can be designed that is capable of more effectively reducing the power asymmetry experienced in this process. With this in mind, even current power theories are not able to adequately address the question. Rather, there is a need to develop a new hypothesis that accommodates multiple approaches as well as the diverse reactions to power relations that are manifested in any SWAp.

10.2 Policy Implications for the SWAp Process in Malawi and Elsewhere

The thesis highlights several policy implications through a detailed analysis of collaboration in this education SWAp process and the challenges it faced due to power relations emanating from the donation of financial aid in particular. In view of the critical nature of civil society's role in the development agenda and the negative experiences that this SWAp partnership experienced with continued DP control of the process, the Ministry of Education should take a policy decision to initiate appropriate legislation that protects and empowers it. This would also assist civil society to perform its watchdog role more effectively; call for the greater accountability of all actors; and enhance sector performance, ultimately leading to the achievement of the international targets envisioned in the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.

This study found that there was a policy gap at DPs' own country/agency level in terms of their conduct in this SWAp process, which indicates a conflict of interests in determining policy priorities in the partnership. Therefore, there is a need to address this through policy reform that aligns global, macro-level and micro-level operations in international development aid. This would help resolve the current situation whereby there is a clear conflict of interests between the government and its DPs that contradicts the expectations of the Paris Declaration to which both actors remain signatories. A second policy area that needs to be addressed is related to the finding that DP mandates and systems failed to change and adapt to expectations, for example, those of the Paris Declaration framework. This suggests that policy reform is also required to address these shortcomings.

The findings of this study indicate that the government fell short in terms of sector planning by not allocating funds to certain programmes. Lack of such planning created problems and compromised the quality of implementation, which was the case with the PCAR initiative to some extent. However, responsibility for programme funding was left to DPs alone. This also implies that there was no clear Ministry of Education policy for the allocation of funds to programmes. Given government centrality in the

identification of priority areas, there is a need for policy that guides the allocation of budget line items, including those that are supported by DP funding.

The thesis argues that the Ministry of Education should take a positive stance to improve this situation. However, the willingness to adjust expressed by government officials in this study is insufficient and formal policy to regulate the practice in future is thus required. This would also reduce incidences whereby the government is held captive by DPs that agree to fund particular programmes, or is left doubly indebted when a DP fails to deliver agreed funding and it is therefore necessary to petition another DP to help remedy the situation, circumstances that if unchecked will weaken the government's position in the SWAp process.

10.3 Directions for Further Research

The thesis provides a few areas in which further research is required if the SWAp process is to be more meaningful and effective. This study identified a good deal of convolution with regard to the role of civil society in this SWAp partnership, in which CSOs were funded by DPs in much the same way as they donated financial assistance to the government. Therefore, CSOs not only tended to be in constant competition with the state where funding was concerned, but, also being subject to government authority, could easily become vulnerable to changes in public sector policy if they were not on good terms with the government of the day.

This study found that although civil society was expected to constitute a vital member of the SWAp partnership, it was rarely viewed as one of the main actors in a relationship that was otherwise seemingly confined to the DPs and the government. There was therefore no adequate mechanism with which civil society could implement meaningful monitoring and supervision. Given that ensuring checks and balances in the SWAp process is a critical role, this becomes an area of concern. Furthermore, in the Malawian context, there was found to be some deviation from the contemporary widely held global notion that the role of the state as the primary development actor was increasingly being challenged by other major actors such as the market and civil society

(Malhotra, n.d.). Such engagement was found to be extremely limited in the case of Malawian civil society, hence its limited participation in the SWAp process.

All these findings serve to indicate that this area requires further investigation and theorization if the position of civil society is to be strengthened in this SWAp partnership. It would be appropriate to undertake a study that investigates in detail the role and performance of civil society in the SWAp process in order to determine how broadly they are affected and to identify the key factors involved with a view to suggesting alternative solutions. Such a study could also serve to critically analyse civil society's priorities in this aspect of the development agenda; whether they represent the interests of the government, the DPs, or the community they are supposed to represent and serve (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Such a study would require multiple methods of data collection over a lengthy period in order to better understand the factors and dynamics behind the current situation that hinders the role of civil society in this SWAp.

Another area that requires further research relates to the capacity gap within the government, particularly in terms of the ability of its officials to engage in a SWAp process according to the principles of ownership and leadership. These call for a certain amount of capacity to lead the SWAp process in bringing together DPs and civil society, and clearly advancing government priorities. However, this study found that in the Malawian SWAp experience, government capacity was identified as wanting right from the start in the sense that the government did not meet the minimum capacity level or "capacity base" to engage meaningfully in a SWAp process which itself involved further government capacity building.

Previous studies have focused on concerns around government capacity, and those of SWAps in general and have mainly addressed the issue of capacity in terms of policy and programme implementation (Brown et al., 2001; Smith, 2005; Samoff, 2004). It is therefore recommended that a further study of the Malawian education SWAp be conducted to specifically examine capacity-related issues and determine the capacity base government officials require if they are to engage meaningfully in the process. Such a study should consider the capacity of individuals as well as those of systems, and must particularly take into account the facts that systems development takes some

time, and that capacity has been identified as an area of concern in other contexts (Brown et al., 2001).

Finally, pre-SWAp capacity assessment should be considered in order to determine a chronological order for the implementation of its elements. Should capacity development precede any SWAp process or should it come at the beginning of the process? And what mechanisms should be put in place in a SWAp process to ensure that capacity development is achieved? Answering these questions is vital because not only does a SWAp involve the capacity development of government officials, but also, more importantly, it revolves around other factors such power relations that can all too easily militate against effective government participation in the first place.

10.4 Conclusions

The thesis has highlighted a number of findings related to this education SWAp partnership that require further research. The initial assertion that a SWAp was a more effective aid modality than the project approach was to say the least optimistic, and was probably made without due consideration for the practice on the ground – which emphasizes the disparity that all too often exists between the principles and practice. Neither did the conceptualization of the SWAp seem to take into account other factors such as the power relations created through the financial muscle of those who donate the most financial aid; the heavy reliance of developing countries on such assistance; or the influence of neo-liberal economic policies.

As a new modality for funding the public sector in developing countries, the SWAp is experiencing more challenges around power relations on the ground than anticipated, as DPs seem to be either unwilling or unable to comply with the principles and partnership model prescribed by the Paris Declaration. Indeed, while the SWAp differs fundamentally and conceptually from the project approach, the reality has shown that nothing much has changed. Although in terms of its principles, the SWAp is still regarded as a promising collaboration mechanism that all aid actors can employ in order to work together towards the common goal of achieving aid effectiveness, it is questionable whether the power asymmetry pertaining to “giver” and “receiver”

dynamics can be minimised. Therefore, perhaps it is time to reconceptualize the whole notion of a SWAp through a process of critical reflection on all the factors that come into play; and, if DPs continue to exercise power based on the amount of money they donate, consideration of what might constitute a practicable adjustment to the concept of the modality.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for DPs and CSO/NGOs

The following questions addresses the nature of partnerships in the education SWAp process in Malawi, and how they influenced policy from the adoption of the PIF to the implementation of the NESP.

Personal Information

Instructions

Please fill in the blank spaces:

Name of organization:

Number of years of employment in Malawi:

Number of years involved in the education SWAp process:

Sex:

Please describe the type of support your organization has rendered to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in respect of the education SWAp process (from PIF to NESP):

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General Questions

The following items are designed to answer the main question, “How do partnerships in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?”

Instructions

Please circle the number on the scale that you consider most accurately indicates your response to the following questions:

1. To what extent do the partnerships in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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2. To what extent do the partnership relations of different stakeholders affect funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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3. To what extent are relationships affected by aid coordination?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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4. To what extent are the roles of stakeholders affected by the amount of funds actors donate to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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5. To what extent does the amount of funds donated to the sector influence stakeholders' participation in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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6. To what extent does the government coordinate the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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7. To what extent do financing mechanisms in the education SWAp process improve funding of sector programmes?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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8. To what extent do power relations around financing affect partnerships in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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9. To what extent has aid to the education sector improved due to the SWAp?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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10. To what extent are partnerships in the education SWAp process effective in mobilizing funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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11. To what extent does leadership in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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12. To what extent do financial mechanisms used in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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13. To what extent is aid through projects implementation accommodated in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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14. To what extent has the funding to the sector improved from the initiation of the PIF to the implementation of the NESP?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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15. To what extent does the biggest financial donor to the education sector exercise power in the SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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16. To what extent have stakeholders in the education SWAp process taken priority areas identified by the government into consideration when funding the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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17. To what extent has DP funding to the sector concentrated on old areas of interest or projects?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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18. To what extent has there been a shift in funding patterns of different stakeholders in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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19. To what extent have the partnership principles applied at various stages in the education SWAp process affected funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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20. To what extent has the pattern of the SWAp partnership influenced funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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Appendix B

Questionnaire for Government Ministries

The following questions addresses the nature of the partnerships in the education SWAp process in Malawi, and how they influenced policy from the adoption of the PIF to the implementation of the NESP.

Personal Information

Instructions

Please fill in the blank spaces:

Ministry and department:

Number of years of employment:

Number of years involved in the education SWAp process:

Sex:

Please describe the type of support each development partner/donor has rendered to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in respect of the education SWAp process (from PIF to NESP):

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General Questions

The following items are designed to answer the main question, “How do partnerships in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?”

Instructions

Please circle the number on the scale that you consider most accurately indicates your response to the following questions:

1. To what extent do the partnerships in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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2. To what extent do the partnership relations of different stakeholders affect funding to the sector?

1. To a very large extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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3. To what extent are relationships affected by aid coordination?

1. To a very large extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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4. To what extent are the roles of stakeholders affected by the amount of funds actors donate to the sector?

1. To a very large extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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5. To what extent does the amount of funds donated to the sector influence stakeholders' participation in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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6. To what extent does the government coordinate the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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7. To what extent do financing mechanisms in the education SWAp process improve funding of sector programmes?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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8. To what extent do power relations around financing affect partnerships in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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9. To what extent has aid to the education sector improved due to the SWAp?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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10. To what extent are partnerships in the education SWAp process effective in mobilizing funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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11. To what extent does leadership in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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12. To what extent do financial mechanisms used in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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13. To what extent is aid through projects implementation accommodated in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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14. To what extent has the funding to the sector improved from the initiation of the PIF to the implementation of the NESP?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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15. To what extent does the biggest financial donor to the education sector exercise power in the SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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16. To what extent have stakeholders in the education SWAp process taken priority areas identified by the government into consideration when funding the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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17. To what extent has DP funding to the sector concentrated on old areas of interest or projects?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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18. To what extent has there been a shift in funding patterns of different stakeholders in the education SWAp process?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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19. To what extent have the partnership principles applied at various stages in the education SWAp process affected funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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20. To what extent has the pattern of the SWAp partnership influenced funding to the sector?

1. To a very large Extent	2. To a large Extent	3. To a fairly large extent	4. To some extent	5. To no extent
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Appendix C

Interview Guide for DPs, Government Officials and CSOs/NGOs

1. The following questions pertain to motivation for the formation of partnerships in the education SWAp process:

1. Can you describe the partnerships formed during the education SWAp process?
2. What is the purpose of partnerships in the education SWAp process?
3. Why are partnerships necessary to the education SWAp process?
4. How were partnerships formed in the education SWAp process?
5. What principles were applied at each stage of the process from PIF to NESP?
6. How effective have the education SWAp partnerships been?
7. What has changed for the better in the sector since the initiation of the education SWAp process?
8. What influenced the shift from the term ‘donor’ to that of ‘development partner’ in the context of the SWAp process?

2. The following questions address ways in which the roles of different stakeholders affect the education SWAp process:

1. What are the roles of different stakeholders in the education SWAp process?
2. Why are different roles necessary in the education SWAp process?
3. How are the roles of different stakeholders coordinated in the education SWAp process?
4. How is the role of leadership played in the education SWAp partnerships?
5. What contributions have different stakeholders brought to the education SWAp process?

3. The following questions seek to clarify the nature of power relations among stakeholders in the SWAp partnerships:

1. What are the relationships between different stakeholders in the SWAp partnerships?
2. What is each/your organization contributing to the SWAp partnerships?
3. How is power exercised among stakeholders in the SWAp partnerships?
4. How do power relations affect the partnerships in the SWAp process?
5. How do decisions made in the SWAp partnerships affect your organization?
6. What would make one stakeholder exercise more power over others in a SWAp partnership?
7. Why are there power relations among stakeholders in the education SWAp partnerships?

Appendix D

Frequency Table

								Total	
		Government Officials		Development Partners		CSOs/NGOs		N	%
		n	%	N	%	N	%		
1. To what extent do partnerships in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?	To a large extent	16	84.2%	14	87.5%	5	100.0%	35	87.5%
	To some extent	3	15.8%	2	12.5%	0	0	5	12.5%
	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. To what extent do the partnership relations of different stakeholders affect funding to the sector?	To a large extent	18	94.7%	14	87.5%	4	80.0%	36	90.0%
	To some extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	1	20.0%	3	7.5%
	To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0	1	2.5%
3. To what extent are relationships affected by aid coordination?	To a large extent	17	89.5%	12	75.0%	4	80.0%	33	82.5%
	To some extent	2	10.5%	4	25.0%	1	20.0%	7	17.5%
	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. To what extent are the roles of stakeholders affected by the amount of funds actors donate to the sector?	To a large extent	16	84.2%	14	87.5%	5	100.0%	35	87.5%
	To some extent	3	15.8%	1	6.3%	0	0	4	10.0%
	To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0	1	2.5%
5. To what extent does the amount of funds donated to the sector influence stakeholders' participation in the education SWAp process?	To a large extent	16	84.2%	14	87.5%	3	60.0%	33	82.5%
	To some extent	3	15.8%	1	6.3%	1	20.0%	5	12.5%
	To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	1	20.0%	2	5.0%
6. To what extent does the government coordinate the education SWAp process?	To a large extent	13	68.4%	12	75.0%	3	60.0%	28	70.0%
	To some extent	6	31.6%	3	18.8%	2	40.0%	11	27.5%
	To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0%	1	2.5%
7. To what extent do financing	To a large extent	18	94.7%	13	81.3%	4	80.0%	35	87.5%

mechanisms in the education SWAp process improve funding of sector programmes?	To some extent	1	5.3%	3	18.8%	1	20.0%	5	12.5%
	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. To what extent do power relations around financing affect partnerships in the education SWAp process?	To a large extent	13	68.4%	14	87.5%	2	40.0%	29	72.5%
	To some extent	5	26.3%	1	6.3%	3	60.0%	9	22.5%
	To no extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	0	0	2	5.0%
9. To what extent has aid to the education sector improved due to the SWAp?	To a large extent	14	73.7%	12	75.0%	2	40.0%	28	70.0%
	To some extent	4	21.1%	4	25.0%	3	60.0%	11	27.5%
	To no extent	1	5.3%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2.5%
10. To what extent are partnerships in the education SWAp process effective in mobilizing funding to the sector?	To a large extent	14	73.7%	12	75.0%	4	80.0%	30	75.0%
	To some extent	5	26.3%	4	25.0%	1	20.0%	10	25.0%
11. To what extent does leadership in the education SWAp process influence funding to the sector?	To a large extent	14	73.7%	15	93.8%	4	80.0%	33	82.5%
	To some extent	4	21.1%	0	0	1	20.0%	5	12.5%
	To no extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	0	0	2	5.0%
12. To what extent do financial mechanisms used in the education SWAp process improve funding to the sector?	To a large extent	17	89.5%	10	62.5%	5	100.0%	32	80.0%
	To some extent	1	5.3%	5	31.3%	0	0%	6	15.0%
	To no extent	1	5.3%	1	6.3%	0	0%	2	5.0%
13. To what extent is aid through projects implementation accommodated in the education SWAp process?	To a large extent	11	57.9%	9	56.3%	4	80.0%	24	60.0%
	To some extent	8	42.1%	6	37.5%	1	20.0%	15	37.5%
	To no extent	0	0%	1	6.3%	0	0%	1	2.5%
14. To what extent has funding to the sector improved from the initiation	To a large extent	16	84.2%	12	75.0%	4	80.0%	32	80.0%
	To some extent	3	15.8%	4	25.0%	1	20.0%	8	20.0%

of the PIF to the implementation of the NESP?	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15. To what extent does the biggest financial donor to the education sector exercise power in the SWAp process?	To a large extent	15	78.9%	11	68.8%	2	40.0%	28	70.0%
	To some extent	2	10.5%	3	18.8%	2	40.0%	7	17.5%
	To no extent	2	10.5%	2	12.5%	1	20.0%	5	12.5%
16. To what extent have stakeholders in the education SWAp process taken priority areas identified by the government into consideration when funding the sector?	To a large extent	14	73.7%	12	80.0%	4	80.0%	30	76.9%
	To some extent	5	26.3%	3	20.0%	1	20.0%	9	23.1%
	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17. To what extent has DP funding to the sector concentrated on old areas of interest or projects?	To a large extent	13	68.4%	10	62.5%	2	40.0%	25	62.5%
	To some extent	6	31.6%	5	31.3%	3	60.0%	14	35.0%
	To no extent	0	0%	1	6.3%	0	0%	1	2.5%
18. To what extent has there been a shift in the funding patterns of different stakeholders in the education SWAp process?	To a large extent	10	52.6%	9	56.3%	2	40.0%	21	52.5%
	To some extent	9	47.4%	6	37.5%	3	60.0%	18	45.0%
	To no extent	0	0	1	6.3%	0	0	1	2.5%
19. To what extent have the partnership principles applied at various stages of the education SWAp process affected funding to the sector?	To a large extent	12	63.2%	13	81.3%	5	100.0%	30	75.0%
	To some extent	6	31.6%	3	18.8%	0	0	9	22.5%
	To no extent	1	5.3%	0	0	0	0	1	2.5%
20. To what extent has the pattern of the SWAp partnership influenced funding to the sector?	To a large extent	17	89.5%	12	75.0%	2	40.0%	31	77.5%
	To some extent	2	10.5%	4	25.0%	3	60.0%	9	22.5%
	To no extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix E

Sussex Institute Ethical Guidelines

University of Sussex

Sussex Institute

Standards and Guidelines on Research Ethics Annex: Checklist for proposed research

Standards 1 & 3: Safeguard the interests and rights of those involved or affected by the research. Establish informed consent.

1.1	Have you considered the well-being of those involved or affected? Have measures been taken to protect their interests (e.g. by clarifying use to be made of outcomes)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Has written and signed consent been obtained without coercion? Have participants been informed of their right to refuse or to withdraw at any time?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Have the purposes and processes of the research been fully explained, using alternative forms of communication where necessary and making reference to any implications for participants of time, cost and the possible influence of the outcomes?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	Where covert research is proposed, has a case been made and brought to the attention of the School committee and approval sought from the relevant external professional ethical committee?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	Does the proposal include procedures to verify data with respondents and offer feedback on findings?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.6	Will the participants be involved in the design, data collection or reporting where feasible?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.7	Has conditional anonymity and confidentiality been offered?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.8	Has the appropriate person (e.g. head teacher, manager of residential home, head of service) been identified to whom disclosures that involve danger to the participant or others, must be reported?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 2: Ensure legislative requirements on human rights and data protection have been met.			
2.1	Have the implications of at least, the four pieces of legislation listed in this document been considered?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Where any particular implications arise from legislation or uncertainties exist, has contact been made with the named university person?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 4: Develop the highest possible standards of research practices including in research design, data collection, storage, analysis, interpretation and reporting			

4.1	Has existing literature and ongoing research been identified and considered?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Have methods been selected to be fit for purpose?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Where appropriate to the research design, will all data collection proposed be used to address the question?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.4	Have methods for verifying data (e.g. audit trails, triangulation, etc.) been built into the research design?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Where research is externally funded, has agreement with sponsors been reached on reporting and intellectual property rights?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4.6	Have plans been made that will enable the archiving of data (e.g. through consulting the guidance available from the UK Data Archive)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 5: Consider the consequences of your work or its misuse for those you study and other interested parties			
5.1	Have the short and long term consequences of the research been considered from the different perspectives of participants, researchers, policy-makers and where relevant, funders?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Have the costs of the research to participants or their institutions/services and any possible compensation been considered?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Has information about support services (e.g. mentoring, counselling) that might be needed as a consequence of any possible unsettling effects of the research itself been identified?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Are the plans flexible enough to ensure that time can be spent discussing any issues that arise from the effects of the research on the individuals or institutions/services?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Standard 6: Ensure appropriate external professional ethical committee approval is granted where relevant			
6.1	Have colleagues/supervisors been invited to comment on your research proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Have any sensitive ethical issues been raised with the School Committee and comments sought?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	If relevant, which includes all health and social care research, has the external professional ethical committee been identified?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	Have the guidelines from that professional committee been used to check the proposed research?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6.5	Do plans include seeking clearance from this committee (e.g. time to obtain approval may need building into the proposal)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix F

Fieldwork Schedule

Timetable for 2008

Quarter	Activity
1	Develop the research proposal
2	Fine-tune the research proposal Develop the research instruments: interview guide and questionnaires Conduct document analysis
3	Get finalized proposal approved Pilot the instruments for data collection* Revise/finalize instruments for data collection*
4	Administer questionnaires* Conduct interviews*

*This did not take place as approval came late in December 2008.

Timetable for 2009

Quarter	Activity
1	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription
2	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription
3	Conduct interviews
4	Conduct interviews

Timetable for 2010

Quarter	Activity
1	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription Data coding
2	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription Data coding
3	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription Data coding
4	Administer questionnaires Conduct interviews Data transcription completed Data collection completed Data coding completed